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# CALIFORNIA HISTORY





## Milestones in California History— The Donahoe Higher Education Act, 30 Years After



Assemblywoman Dorothy M. Donahoe (1911-1960).  
Courtesy California State Library.

In the spring of 1960, the California legislature passed the Donahoe Higher Education Act, a major educational reform measure. Signing it into law on April 26, Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown termed it "the most significant step California has ever taken in planning for the education of our youth."

The governor correctly assessed the act's historic significance. It created a master plan for higher education that guided the phenomenal expansion of higher education in the state during the 1960s and, though it since has been amended, still provides direction today. The Donahoe Act spelled out the functions of the three units of public higher education—the University of California system, the State Colleges (now the State University), and the Community Colleges. It created a new State College system with a twenty-member Board of Trustees (removing the colleges from the control of the State Department of Education). Further, it established a fifteen-member Coordinating Council with representatives from the three segments of public education, private colleges, and the general public to oversee the growth of education in the state and submit recommendations to the legislature.

In 1960, college enrollments were rising rapidly because of post-war migration, government programs, and the "baby boom." New colleges had been created in helter-skelter fashion by local communities and the state, however, and the legislature was under constant pressure to fund new ventures. In this near-anarchical situation, the Donahoe Act brought ordered planning and, if not harmony, a measure of control. In the past thirty years, the master plan has provided a model for other states and nations, many of which sent consultants to California to study its educational operations and subsequently established similar governing structures.

Many individuals played a role in shaping the master plan, but perhaps none so much as an assemblywoman from Bakersfield, Dorothy M. Donahoe, who has yet to receive the historic recognition she deserves. Donahoe was born in Los Angeles in 1911, but moved to Bakersfield in 1914 and graduation from secondary school there. Rather than attend college, she took a secretarial job to support her mother. For sixteen years she served as registrar of Bakersfield High School. Handicapped as the result of infantile paralysis and asthma, she nevertheless joined a wide variety of civic and philanthropic organizations. As state president of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, she urged women to become active in politics, vowing that "they belong in government as equal partners of men." When friends asked her to run for the assembly in a new district in 1952, she recalled, "I was caught in my own sermon; I had to practice what I preached." She won easily.

In Sacramento, Donahoe was assigned to the Education and the Ways and Means committees. There she developed her legislative specialties: youth, education, the handicapped, and mental hospitals. She became vice-chair of the Education Committee in January 1955, and chair in January 1959.

As a committee leader, Donahoe drafted ACR 88, a resolution directing the state Board of Education and the university Board of Regents to establish a Master Plan Survey Team in 1959 to study the state's higher-education needs. She attended many hearings of the team and its advisory committees, participating in policy discussions. On December 18, 1959, when the Regents and the Board met to approve the team's recommendations, Donahoe urged Governor Brown, the presiding officer, to "give us the opportunity of building a structure so these architects and their plans might be consummated to true fulfillment."

Donahoe then shepherded the recommendations through the legislature. Tragically, on the eve of their passage, on April 4, 1960, she was rushed to a Sacramento hospital with pneumonia and died within an hour. In part because of their respect for her, her colleagues enacted the master plan with rare unanimity. Assembly Speaker Ralph Brown praised Dorothy Donahoe as the most outstanding woman legislator in California history. Thirty years later, the Donahoe Act is still a working document and a living monument to the woman whose name it bears.

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On the cover: Maynard Dixon sketch, gouache on paper, depicting one of the phases of California history for his Mark Hopkins Hotel mural, San Francisco, 1926. This sketch portrays the Spanish period. The Mark Hopkins Hotel mural is discussed in an article by Beverly Denenberg and Paul Bingham in this issue. Courtesy Bingham Gallery, San Jose, California.

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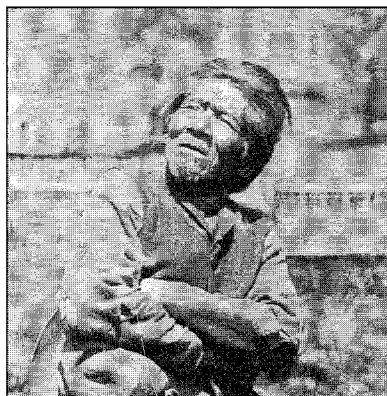
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# CALIFORNIA INDIANS AND THE WORKADAY WEST: Labor, Assimilation, and Survival

*by Albert L. Hurtado*

**T**wo images of the Indian haunt American history: the noble red man and the implacable savage. Both effigies are inaccurate stereotypes that exaggerate real and imagined qualities of the native people of North America. On the one hand, the noble Indian had high ideals, fought courageously when he was wronged, delivered powerful orations on the iniquities of white civilization, and always insisted on simple justice. The noble Indian possessed one of the quintessential qualities of the westerner. He was a square shooter. His evil twin, however, was an altogether different case. He was given to dark rages, and came equipped with an insatiable appetite for bloody revenge, an unlimited capacity for violence, and a perverse talent for outrageous torture.<sup>1</sup>

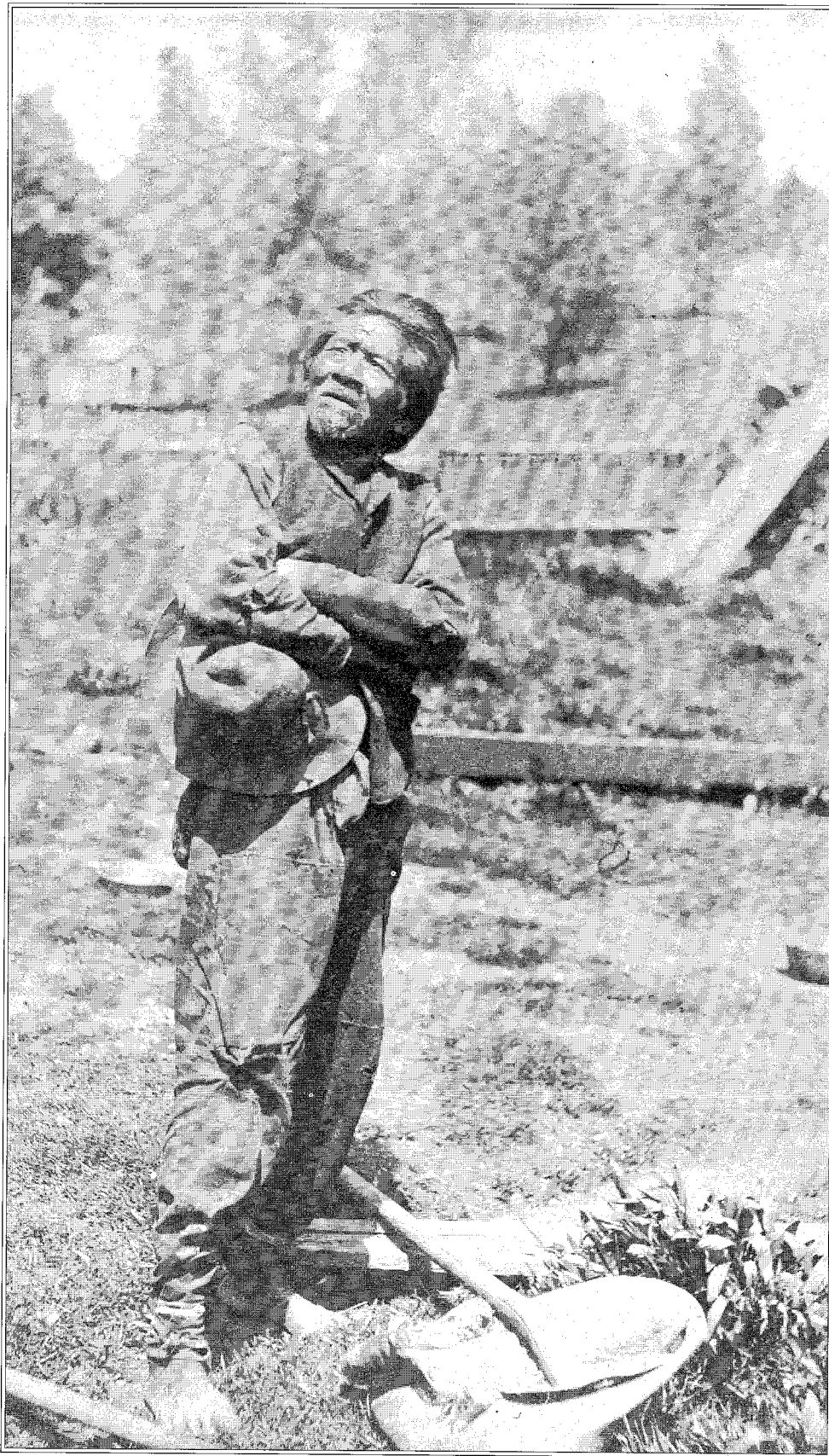
We must wonder how these radically dissimilar stereotypes could persist side by side for so long. Still, there is one area where the images seem to converge. According to legend, neither noble nor brute Indians ever did a lick of work. This is an important point that verges on the reality of the American West and the Indians who lived there. Tribal life—at least for Indian men—was a life of unstructured ease, or so white Americans believed. They defined much traditional male Indian work—especially hunting and fishing—as sport, and failed to recognize the agricultural heritage of many tribes. To white eyes, only Indian women showed a spark of ambition, but female work was the exception

that proved the rule of Indian laziness. For Victorian tastes, Indian women did entirely too much heavy work while their men lounged about.<sup>2</sup>

Nineteenth-century reformers and Indian office bureaucrats devoutly hoped to convert Indians from hunters and gatherers to solid, laboring, Christian citizens. Such a conversion, reformers believed, would herald the temporal and spiritual salvation of Indians. They also believed that Indians would have to be educated to work—for their own good, of course.<sup>3</sup> In 1881, after a stint as Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz put the matter succinctly. He declared that Indians would have to “be taught to work by making work profitable and attractive to them.”<sup>4</sup>

Self-interest also informed nineteenth-century notions about tribalism and motivated those who wanted to open Indian lands to white settlers. Indians who continued to rely on hunting and gathering retarded progress by hoarding lands that white hands could make productive. To open western resources to white ambitions, Indians would have to be removed to reservations where they would learn the arts of civilization, including the “art” of labor, as nineteenth-century social thinkers understood that term. Once tribesmen were properly trained, individual Indians would receive one-hundred-sixty-acre homesteads from tribal lands, and the excess could be opened to white settlement. Indians could then be assimilated



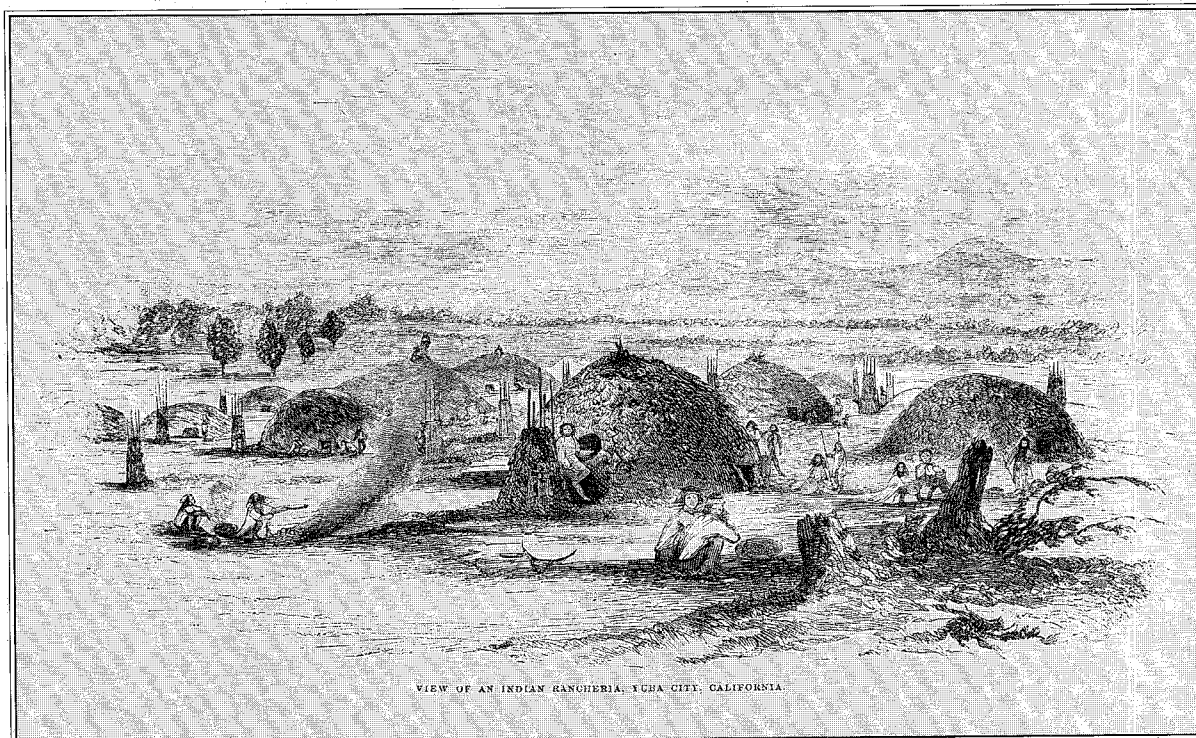


Sam Pit worked at Sutter's mill and accompanied James Marshall, Sutter's partner. While Indians were among the Gold Rush's first miners, they were progressively moved out by the whites, who relegated them to the most menial jobs. *Courtesy California State Library.*



California Indians were hunters and gatherers before the coming of Europeans. They depended on the natural produce of the land, but the Spanish and later American immigrants insisted that the land should be cultivated. The members of this Nisenan community near John Sutter's Hock Farm in the vicinity of Yuba City probably worked part of the time on a nearby farm.

*Courtesy  
California State  
Library.*



into white society and could enjoy the benefits of honest labor, while former tribal lands were cultivated by the plows of Indian and white farmers. Otherwise, according to observers like former Secretary Schurz, tribal lands would be "waste," standing "in the way of what is commonly called 'the development of the country.'"<sup>5</sup>

Reformers and bureaucrats theorized that Indian assimilation, labor, land, and western development were related. They also believed that labor had intrinsic value and that hard work would elevate the Indian in American society, even if Indians were relegated to doing fieldwork for white farmers. As late as 1906 Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis Leupp recommended leasing Indian lands to white sugar beet farmers who would employ Indian stoop labor. Leupp thought that Indian children could "weed the rows just as the pickaninny in the South can be used as a cotton picker."<sup>6</sup> Simple labor, in Leupp's mind would do more for the Indians than all of the philanthropy, education, and government supervision of the preceding century. Labor in the workaday West would reclaim Indian lives and land for productive purposes.

This essay sketches a different view of Indian labor in the workaday West. Focusing on mid-nineteenth-century California, we will see how Indian workers helped to transform a remote frontier into a quickly modernizing part of the western

world. Indians participated in this process, but did not ultimately benefit from it. The California Indian experience is a case study of the effects of Indian assimilation that expands the dimensions of western labor history.

California Indians first became workers, in the European sense of the word, during the era of Spanish colonization. Using tactics developed elsewhere on the Spanish American frontier, Franciscan missionaries colonized the Pacific seaboard in the eighteenth century, establishing a string of missions where Indians learned the Catholic faith, Spanish customs, trades, and work habits. Indian neophytes—Catholic converts—learned the vocations associated with farming and livestock ranching, the principal industries of the missions. California Indians had been hunters, fishers, and gatherers, so farming was an innovation. Work in agriculture and animal husbandry required both subtle and radical adjustments for the mission inmates. Reliant on wild plant foods for subsistence, Indians knew well the cycle of the seasons and appreciated the need to reap an abundant harvest to insure against privation. Plowing, sowing, and weeding crops, however, required a new level of attention to plant foods. Moreover, in native society women had been primarily responsible for gathering and preparing plant foods.



Spaniards, however, believed that field work was the province of men. Thus, the introduction of agriculture affected not only the Indian economic sphere, but gender roles as well. Female neophytes turned their attention to household tasks appropriate to Spanish conceptions of women's work—cooking, cleaning, spinning, weaving, sewing, and childcare.<sup>7</sup>

Domestic livestock ranching was entirely new to the Indians, but neophytes promptly learned how to ride horses and herd cattle. In California, Indian *vaqueros* helped to shape the cowboy tradition in North America. Indian cowboys not only tended mission herds, they stole from them as well. By the 1840s Indian livestock raiding was well established in California, particularly among the Miwoks, Yokuts, and other San Joaquin Valley Indians. These horse-mounted Indians rustled horses to use for antelope and elk hunting in the valley of the San Joaquin. They also added horse meat to their diet.

It is worth mentioning that Miwok and Yokut raiders stole horses from rancho herds for more than food and transportation. By 1845 there were perhaps forty thousand wild horses in the San Joaquin Valley. Raiders rode *through* those feral herds to take horses from their coastal enemies, palpably weakening the Hispanic settlements and diminishing the chances of counterattacks. In some towns there was hardly a horse left for *californios* to ride. By the end of the Mexican era, rancheros had to go to the valley to round up the progeny of their stolen animals to replenish their herds. Indian raiders and workers were often the same people, or closely allied through tribal, kinship, and historic bonds. Thus, Indians had established a complex symbiotic relationship with Hispanic people who relied on Indian labor, but feared livestock raiders.<sup>8</sup>

These events illustrate two important developments. First, they show that converted Indians moved into the pastoral work force in Hispanic California, initially in the missions, and later on the Mexican ranchos.<sup>9</sup> Second, they reveal that independent Indians also adapted new work and subsistence patterns associated with the horse. These innovations are comparable to changes in Plains Indian life facilitated by acquisition of the horse. Moreover, the California experience shows that labor and raiding were not necessarily antithetical, but could go together.

Anglo Americans who began to arrive in California in substantial numbers in the 1840s took up the Hispanic tradition of Indian labor and faced the perils of livestock raiding. In a land that contained more than one hundred thousand Indians and only a few thousand whites, they had little choice. John A. Sutter, lord of New Helvetia and Sutter's Fort at present day Sacramento, provided a role model for Anglo settlers in the interior. Like Hispanic missionaries and rancheros, he employed hundreds of Indians in his fields and shops. Sutter, who embellished his military experience to impress the gullible, found willing Indian allies and fashioned a frontier army. Drilled in German and dressed in garish uniforms Sutter had purchased from the Russians when they abandoned Fort Ross, this Indian force must have made an outlandish scene on the plains of the Sacramento Valley.<sup>10</sup>

Sutter used his Indian garrison both to compel reluctant Indians to labor in his fields and to conscript native workers for other ranchers. Often heralded for his humane treatment of Indians, in 1845 Sutter frankly stated that Indians had to be kept "strictly under fear" for the benefit of white landowners.<sup>11</sup> Sutter leased and sold Indian workers to other California landowners, yet the labor practices of early California defy simple characterization as slavery. Some Indians were actual slaves, but others voluntarily took up wage labor. Still others were coerced into the labor market through a system of debt peonage. And some became virtual serfs as whites seized Indian land.<sup>12</sup> Of Indians who voluntarily worked for Sutter, most were Nisenans and Miwoks, among them former mission Indians and livestock raiders. They labored for Sutter because he provided them with a steady supply of trade goods.<sup>13</sup> His army also shielded them from slave raiders from the coast.<sup>14</sup> And Sutter conferred power and status on cooperative headmen.<sup>15</sup> Thus, many Indians worked for Sutter because it was in their interest to do so. By such means, Sutter was able to gather an Indian cadre of soldiers and workers that simultaneously attracted and compelled more Indians to enter New Helvetia's world of work.

In the 1840s Indians were not barriers to modernization in California. Rather, they were participants in that process as they constructed homes and tilled farms for white landlords. Perhaps as





Miwok Indians working on the McFarland Ranch near Galt in the late nineteenth century. Indians performed many tasks, both menial and skilled, on the ranchos. This posed scene shows a variety of activities being carried out. The female population, which began to decline during the Gold Rush, is reflected in the woman kneading bread and the old woman in the background. *Courtesy California State Library.*

many as ten thousand Indian workers labored in California at the time of the Mexican War.<sup>16</sup> Jobs for individual Indians, however, did not necessarily benefit Indian society. Employment took men away from their rancherías and left women, children, and old people unprotected. Anglo, Indian, and Mexican marauders ravaged these vulnerable communities. By the end of the Mexican era, interior Indian communities were in decline, the result of disease, demands for labor, and vulnerability to attack.<sup>17</sup>

As Sutter's native army illustrates, Indians also served in military forces under white command. The conquest of the American West required soldiers as well as farmers. From colonial times through the nineteenth century, Indian allies had fought with both European and United States armies.<sup>18</sup> California was no exception. Some one hundred Indians assisted the United States' conquest of Mexico by enlisting in John Frémont's California Battalion. As scouts, fighters, and rustlers of Mexican horses, they contributed to American success in an isolated theatre of frontier warfare. The United States might well have prevailed without Indian help, but

in 1846 Lieutenant Colonel Frémont, Commodore Robert F. Stockton, and General Stephen Watts Kearny could not know that. They gladly relied on the tested practice of enlisting Indian allies in the American cause.<sup>19</sup>

Demography substantially shaped the role of Indian labor in peace and war. Until the Gold Rush, Indians constituted the largest part of California's population, outnumbering non-Indians by more than ten to one.<sup>20</sup> Within a few years of the gold discovery, however, the ratio of Indian to whites would be inverted, as whites hastened to the gold fields and Indian death rates accelerated.<sup>21</sup> Despite this historic shift, Indian labor remained evident in fields and mines in the 1850s. Not surprisingly, Mexican and Anglo rancheros took their workers to the mines in 1848 and 1849, capitalizing on their control of Indian labor. Sutter became an Indian labor contractor, hoping to profit from his New Helvetia experience by supplying Indian miners to white employers. In the first flush of the Gold Rush, Indian miners were ubiquitous, and many whites who employed them reaped substantial profits.<sup>22</sup>



As in agriculture, Indian participation in mining was a varied experience. Using methods similar to Sutter's, whites coerced some Indians to mine for them. Other Indians worked as free laborers for a share of the gold they found. And whole *rancherías* sometimes devoted themselves to prospecting. One observer saw an Indian community, most likely Miwoks, at work in a Sierra stream in 1849. Men dug gravel from the streambed and carried it to the banks where women washed the gold in finely-woven baskets shaped like mining pans. Children wrapped the clean dust and nuggets in pieces of cloth, ready for trading.<sup>23</sup>

These Miwok miners evidently bought life's necessities from white merchants. Unscrupulous traders hoodwinked unsuspecting Indian customers by selling food and other goods to them for their weight in gold, but the practice was short-lived. Indians were shrewd bargainers accustomed to a barter economy, and they soon came to understand the relative value of gold.<sup>24</sup> In some parts of California they demanded minted coins for their services, thus protecting themselves from sharp traders who would defraud them.<sup>25</sup> Yet as Indians spent more time mining, they had less time to engage in traditional hunting and gathering work.



Mike Clenso, a Nisenan Indian who had worked for John Sutter at New Helvetia, was obviously a man of enough means to buy nice clothes for himself and his bride. *Courtesy California State Library.*



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Thus, even as they traded with white merchants on a more equal footing, they became increasingly dependent on the new economic order that governed California.

On the whole, mining had many of the same effects on Indian society that farm labor had: depleted communities, fragmented families, women and children at risk. Anglo Saxon racism added a new dimension to the already formidable perils of California Indian and white relations. Many white miners came to California with ideas about Indians shaped by generations of pioneering. They believed that the presence of Indians and settled life were incompatible. Free white miners were hostile towards an Hispanic labor system they regarded as akin to slavery. Hating Indians, fearing competition, and committed to white racial domination, ruthless miners quickly drove Indian workers from the mines. In 1849, Oregonians, who were especially embittered by the 1847 Cayuse War, began to kill Indians and threaten whites who tried to protect them. Often hunting parties opened fire on defenseless men, women, and children alike wiping out entire *rancherías*. Such brutal attacks continued through the 1850s.<sup>26</sup> As a result of white violence against them, native miners abandoned this type of labor. Some Indians did remain near the mining camps, working as day laborers when they could, living when desperate on the offal from slaughter pens.<sup>27</sup>

If mining became off-limits for Indians, other forms of native labor were in demand. Some Indian women, poverty stricken and defenseless, resorted to prostitution to feed themselves and their children. More fortunate women lived with lonely white miners who had to cope in a land where there were very few marriageable white women. These liaisons were often temporary arrangements that men abandoned when they left the mines or when white women arrived on the scene. In the meantime, Indian women did the necessary domestic work that Victorian culture decreed to be woman's lot—cooking, cleaning, and child rearing. In these employments, Indian women shared much with their white sisters, though they remained racial and social worlds apart.<sup>28</sup>

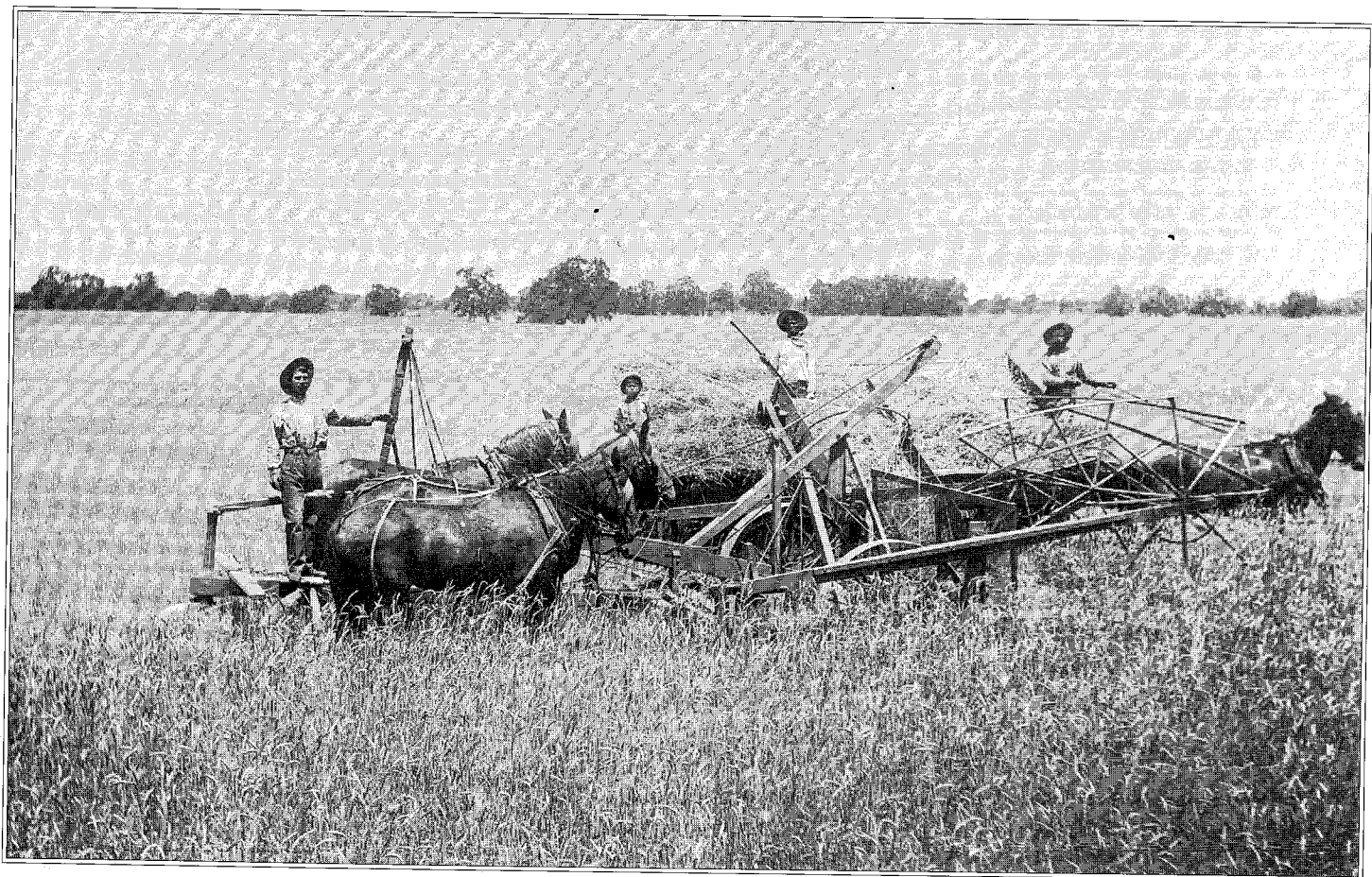
Not all Indian women found employment in prostitution or domestic arrangements. Some worked placer mine tailings, panning out the remnant gold that had escaped from white miners' sluices.

White farmers sometimes permitted women to glean their fields after the harvest. Other women found jobs as cooks and domestics in homes and hotels, or toiled at washboards in commercial laundries.<sup>29</sup>

Proximity to white settlements left Indian women vulnerable to physical and sexual exploitation. According to white observers, it was common for white men to rape Indians in the 1850s.<sup>30</sup> The damage to Indian women and their communities from such assaults can only be guessed at, but some observers claimed that much of the conflict between the races resulted from sexual violence.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, interracial sexual contact of all kinds resulted in the spread of syphilis, a great killer of Indians throughout California. General debility brought on by malnutrition, infectious diseases, syphilis, and bad living conditions combined to lower Indian birth rates and increase infant mortality. Most tragically, in a population in rapid, prolonged decline, Indian women died at a faster rate than men. By 1860 women represented only forty percent of the Indian population. The scarcity of women meant that Indians would have a difficult time forming families, restoring former population levels, and surviving in California. The destruction of the female Indian population accordingly contributed perceptibly to the decimation of the native people of California. The exploitation of women in the work force, moreover, tended to exacerbate the forces that worked against them. Thus work and Indian population decline were closely related in California.<sup>32</sup>

Shut out of mining jobs and marginalized in the booming gold rush economy in the 1850s, Indians found agricultural employment to be the only significant opportunity left for them in the "free" market economy. Indeed, in 1850 demand for agricultural labor was so high that whites sought legal means to retain Indian workers. One of the earliest acts of California's first state legislature was to pass a law "for the government and protection of the Indians," legislation that provided little protection for Indians but that served well the state's white agricultural interests.<sup>33</sup> This statute provided that justices of the peace could indenture Indian orphans and adult loiterers to white farmers. Children served until the age of majority and adults for a term of service determined by justices of the peace. This law was subject to outrageous abuse,





Indian workers harvesting wheat on the McFarland Ranch, Galt, late 1880s. Agricultural mechanization made it possible for the state to ship an ever-increasing amount of its produce across the country and around the world. The growth of the state's output, though, was not matched by increased employment of Indians. Miners from the Mother Lode and later the Comstock, along with other immigrants who were willing to work for low wages, forced Indian workers off the farms. *Courtesy California State Library.*



particularly in far northern and southern California. In the north, slave traders killed Indian parents and sold the children. California Indian Superintendent Thomas Henley reported in 1855 that kidnapped Indians fetched fifty to two hundred fifty dollars each.<sup>34</sup> The town of Los Angeles held weekly auctions of Indian vagrants.<sup>35</sup>

These extremes aside, it appears that the 1850 law was not enforced in much of California. The historical record is full of examples of Indian vagrants who were not apprehended—even in farm country—and free Indians continued to work as wage earners.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, white employers had to treat their workers with care because abused Indian laborers sometimes exacted reprisals from their masters. Near Red Bluff in 1859 an irate Indian servant set fire to the house of E.A. Stevenson, completely destroying the residence and killing Stevenson's wife and children. The Indian escaped to the Sierra Nevada, where he joined other Indians, many of whom had been brought up by whites. According to the pioneer reminiscences of Irvin Ayres, these Indians were the most dangerous in the country. They selected their targets for the sake of vengeance, sometimes attacking victims in the heart of the settlements.<sup>37</sup>

Given the increased demand for foodstuffs generated by the Gold Rush, farm labor seemed to offer a chance for survival to Indian workers, freemen and bondsmen alike. But for most Indians, this prospect was illusory. The era of the Gold Rush was also an age of rapid mechanization in agriculture. Labor was still required, but machines replaced many human hands.<sup>38</sup> Steam-powered combine harvesters, horse-driven headers, reapers, and threshers marched across the fertile valleys, pushing Indian workers out of the fields.<sup>39</sup> The wheat harvest on one large farm, for example, that once required scores of Indians, in 1860 employed only twenty-two.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, many white farmers in the 1850s were newcomers with no experience or sympathy toward Indian labor. Many white laborers, pushed out of the gold districts as mining became more complex and capital intensive, entered the agricultural work force, a circumstance that white landholders found to their liking. At wages of more than a dollar per day, however, whites were nearly twice as expensive as Indians.<sup>41</sup> Even so, in 1856 Sutter claimed that he could employ whites more cheaply than Indians. Perhaps

exaggerating, he asserted that whites were more dependable and ate less than Indian workmen.<sup>42</sup> Without an economic advantage even in the mind of a longtime Indian employer, there was little reason to hire native workers. In the 1850s, as miners and farmers pushed them off their traditional homelands, California Indians' employment opportunities steadily evaporated.

The federal government, vested with jurisdiction over Indian affairs, did little to improve the situation. Faced with local opposition to any plan that would set aside permanent Indian reservations, the national government instead established temporary reserves that were closed on demand from white settlers. Equipped with an experienced Indian labor force, administrators reasoned, temporary reservations could be self-sustaining, but poor land, inept management, and inadequate congressional appropriations doomed this policy.<sup>43</sup> The stopgap temporary reserves ministered to only a fraction of the California Indians; the majority were left to the mercy of the marketplace. With plain evidence of the failure of the temporary reserves in hand, the federal government closed most of them in the late 1850s. In 1860 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs urged California agents to find employment for reservation Indians with farmers and tradesmen, but the time when the California economy could absorb more Indian labor had long since passed.<sup>44</sup>

Substantially abandoned by the federal government and progressively forced out of the work force, California Indians were in desperate circumstances. Only a minority survived the Gold Rush. In 1848 they numbered more than one hundred thousand; by 1860 about thirty thousand remained.<sup>45</sup> Impoverished and dispossessed, many of the survivors became vagabonds who found work in seasonal farm labor or in whatever employment was offered. Some farmers permitted small Indian communities to live on their land. And a few remnant bands retreated to the mountains where they eked out a precarious existence.<sup>46</sup>

**T**he tragic history of California Indians in the mid-nineteenth century offers some sobering insights into the workaday West. Conventionally viewed as an era of economic opportunity that encouraged individualism, freedom, and



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democracy, California's sharply stratified society included a lower class of free and unfree Indian workers.<sup>47</sup> Building on the earlier Hispanic model, Anglo-Americans quickly adopted Indian labor and held fast to it until the Gold Rush brought substantial numbers of white working men to the Golden State. In the meantime, they enacted legislation that would compel Indians to find work with white farmers, a practice that continued until 1863.

While many Indians were compelled to work, it is also striking to see how many others embraced wage labor in California. They had many motives for doing so. First, traditional life ways became increasingly untenable as white settlement expanded. Second, by selling their labor Indians acquired new material goods that revolutionized their lives—horses, guns, cloth, metalware, and the like. Finally, in a land that was increasingly dangerous for Indians, they could expect some measure of security from assault only if they were employed by white men. Ultimately, however, while gainful employment offered some protection to individual Indians, it tended to disintegrate Indian society. Seasonal farm work broke up communities and divided families, hastening the destruction of California Indian tribes. The situation was particularly hard on women, who risked sexual assaults or who, out of desperation, resorted to prostitution. Because Indian women died at an even more rapid rate than men, native society had little opportunity to form families and restore their population losses.<sup>48</sup>

The California experience is germane to wider issues in American Indian history as well. The decades after the Gold Rush saw the rise of an Indian reform movement that emphasized assimilation into white society as the key to Indian survival. A careful look at the Indian ordeal in California might have given reformers reason to question the wisdom of assimilating Indians into a rapidly changing society imbued with racist notions. For most California Indians, assimilation was a revolving door with deadly effects.

A final observation reveals an incongruity in California Indian history. Far from being barriers to civilization, Indians aided the rapid development of California in the mid-nineteenth century. In this faraway region of the workaday West, Indians pulled on their laborers' clothes, walked into the marketplace, and set to work. Their contributions were swiftly forgotten as others built on the foundations Indian hands had erected. Ultimately, the benefits of a civilization that Indians had helped to create went to others.

CHS

*See notes beginning on page 77.*

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*Al Hurtado received the Ray A. Billington award in 1989 for his new book, Indian Survival on the California Frontier. Hurtado, Associate Professor of History at Arizona State University, is currently working on another book, Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender and Culture in the American West.*



# Thomas Starr King in California, 1860-64: *Forgotten Naturalist of the Civil War Years*

by Richard Peterson

In 1861, as the Civil War began east of the Mississippi, states and territories west of the river were forced to declare their political allegiance to the Union or to the Confederacy.\* This momentous decision probably was considered more important in California—a free state that had joined the Union in 1850—than in adjacent areas. Although California's distance from the military front militated against substantial involvement of troops, its rich gold supply, a quicksilver mine at New Almaden necessary to the manufacture of gunpowder, and various products such as wool and wheat made remote California a potentially significant asset for the contending forces of war.<sup>1</sup>

Would California stay with the United States, join the Confederacy, or even perhaps go its own way as an independent Pacific Republic? Although considered, the state legislature killed the latter option by joint resolution on May 17, 1861. However, there is no doubt that Confederate supporters and states' rights advocates were active in California politics and public opinion during these critical years. Through pro-Confederate newspapers like the *Los Angeles Star* and the *Visalia Expositor*, such secret subversive pro-southern organizations as the Knights of the Golden Circle, the Knights of the Columbian Star, and the Committee of Thirty, and rumored and attempted seizures of forts, ships, and gold shipments to Lincoln's treasury, they tried to create a Confederate California and undermine the Union war effort. However, this threat has been exaggerated by most historians. In 1860, less than 7% of California's population had come originally from the seceded states. Yet, nothing could be taken for granted during this volatile

period, and it took the moving oratory of a Boston Unitarian minister, Thomas Starr King, to effectively argue the case for the Union and Lincoln.<sup>2</sup>

Who was Thomas Starr King and what brought him to California on the eve of the Civil War? This minister, lecturer, and writer was of German, French, and English ancestry. His maternal grandfather, Thomas Starr, was born in the Rhineland, but came to America in the late eighteenth century and married a woman of French origins, Mary Lavinus. Thomas Starr King was the oldest child of their daughter Susan and the Reverend Thomas Farrington King, a Universalist minister of English ancestry. The boy, commonly called Starr King, was born in New York in 1824. Before he reached the age of fifteen, the death of his father forced him to work to help support the family, which included five younger children. Although barely sixteen at the time, King was appointed an assistant teacher in a grammar school in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Two years later, he became the principal of another grammar school in New England. In 1843 he accepted the position of bookkeeper in the Charlestown Navy Yard because of the larger salary and more free time. Despite a limited formal education, his obvious responsibility and intelligence allowed him to advance his career rapidly.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout King's youth, he acquired knowledge on his own. By the time he was nineteen, he could read French, Spanish, Latin, Italian, and some Greek. Soon he began to preach, since he had aspired to the ministry from boyhood. Despite his small size and gentle disposition, he had the power to captivate his audiences with a rich resounding voice. His friend and adviser, the anti-slavery advocate Reverend Theodore Parker, said: "He has the grace of God in his heart and the gift of tongues." Such talent led him to the pastorate of

\*The author would like to thank the American Association for State and Local History and the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Grant-in-Aid of Research in support of this article.





Thomas Starr King and his wife, the former Julia Wigin, enjoyed four brief years in San Francisco before his death in 1864 at the age of 40. *Courtesy California State Library.*



the Hollis Street Unitarian Church in Boston in 1848, the same year he married Julia Wiggin of East Boston. For the next eleven years, he was one of the most popular preachers in the city and was equally well received as a lecturer on the country's Lyceum circuit.<sup>4</sup>

Despite such popular support in New England, King decided in 1860 to accept an invitation to head the struggling Unitarian parish in San Francisco. In words reminiscent of Henry David Thoreau, he explained to a friend: "I do think we are unfaithful in huddling so closely around the cosy stove of civilization in this blessed Boston, and I, for one, am ready to go out into the cold and see if I am good for anything."<sup>5</sup> Yet, it was not faith alone that appeared to motivate him. A dedicated Unionist, he may have been looking for a new challenge in the politically significant state of California as the nation approached the irrepressible conflict. More significantly, the *Alta California* for March 5, 1864, indicates that the generous monetary offer made by the San Francisco parish would help King liquidate his brother's business debts in excess of \$20,000. In any event, Californians came in droves to hear him preach and lecture on the relationship of their state to the Union. Even the rugged miners were moved. "I say, Jim, stand on your toes and get a sight of him!" exclaimed an old miner to a companion as on the edge of a crowd they listened to one of his speeches in support of the Union, "Why, the boy is taking every trick."<sup>6</sup>

King's sermon-like political speeches throughout the state, often inspired by biblical themes such as "The Choice Between Barabbas and Jesus" and "The Treason of Judas Iscariot," helped to maintain California's loyalty.<sup>7</sup> This was demonstrated in part by a plurality of California votes for Lincoln in the presidential election of 1860 and in the state campaigns of 1861, when the Republicans and Union Democrats repudiated secession and gave their support to the Union. In fact, in the latter year, the continuing Democratic schism, which had facilitated Lincoln's national and statewide election, enabled the California Republicans to elect their first governor, Leland Stanford, by a substantial plurality.<sup>8</sup> King obviously was not responsible for "saving California for the Union," as some have asserted.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, he worked tirelessly toward that end until his premature death from diphtheria and pneumonia in 1864.

Despite his previous New England ministerial experience, King was not just a self-educated

powerful preacher who won social stature in San Francisco that was denied him in Brahmin Boston. His captivating oratory and lecture tours on behalf of the Union also were responsible for contributing to the work of the United States Sanitary Commission, otherwise known as the "Red Cross of the Civil War," regarding its medical aid to the Union forces. Although Governor F.F. Low was president of the commission's California branch, King was a major spokesman. In large part because of his efforts, California, beginning in the fall of 1862, raised one-quarter (\$1,234,000) of the amount the commission received from the entire nation. According to students of California history, "It was the eloquence of Starr King that saved the Commission's work from financial ruin."<sup>10</sup> As a result, King was able to combine his political goals with his humanitarian motives.

His work in California also included bringing the gospel to the relatively "unchurched" mining society of frontier California. By 1864, he had achieved financial security from some well-timed investments in Nevada's Comstock Lode. Such success enabled him to move into a new Gothic-style church on Geary Street in San Francisco with the Union flag flying conspicuously from the roof. Apparently, he saw no contradiction in this despite the cherished ideal of separation of church and state. Indeed, as a patriotic preacher he recognized that the two could be amicably joined.<sup>11</sup>

King's multifaceted contributions to California were honored posthumously by selection (along with Father Junípero Serra) as one of only two Californians represented in the National Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C.<sup>12</sup> Historian Kevin Starr has gone so far as to claim that King is second only to Lincoln in California history as martyr for the Union cause; this position is sometimes reserved for David Broderick, a rough-and-tumble former Tammany Hall politician who came to California from New York in the 1850s and spoke out against the extension of slavery in the territories until a duelling match silenced his voice on the very eve of the Civil War.<sup>13</sup> In any event, it is certainly arguable that King deserves his prominent place in the nation's capital.

Although most scholars of California history are generally familiar with King's work for the Union, the Sanitary Commission, and the spread of Unitarianism in the state, much less is known about his deep, often spiritual interest in

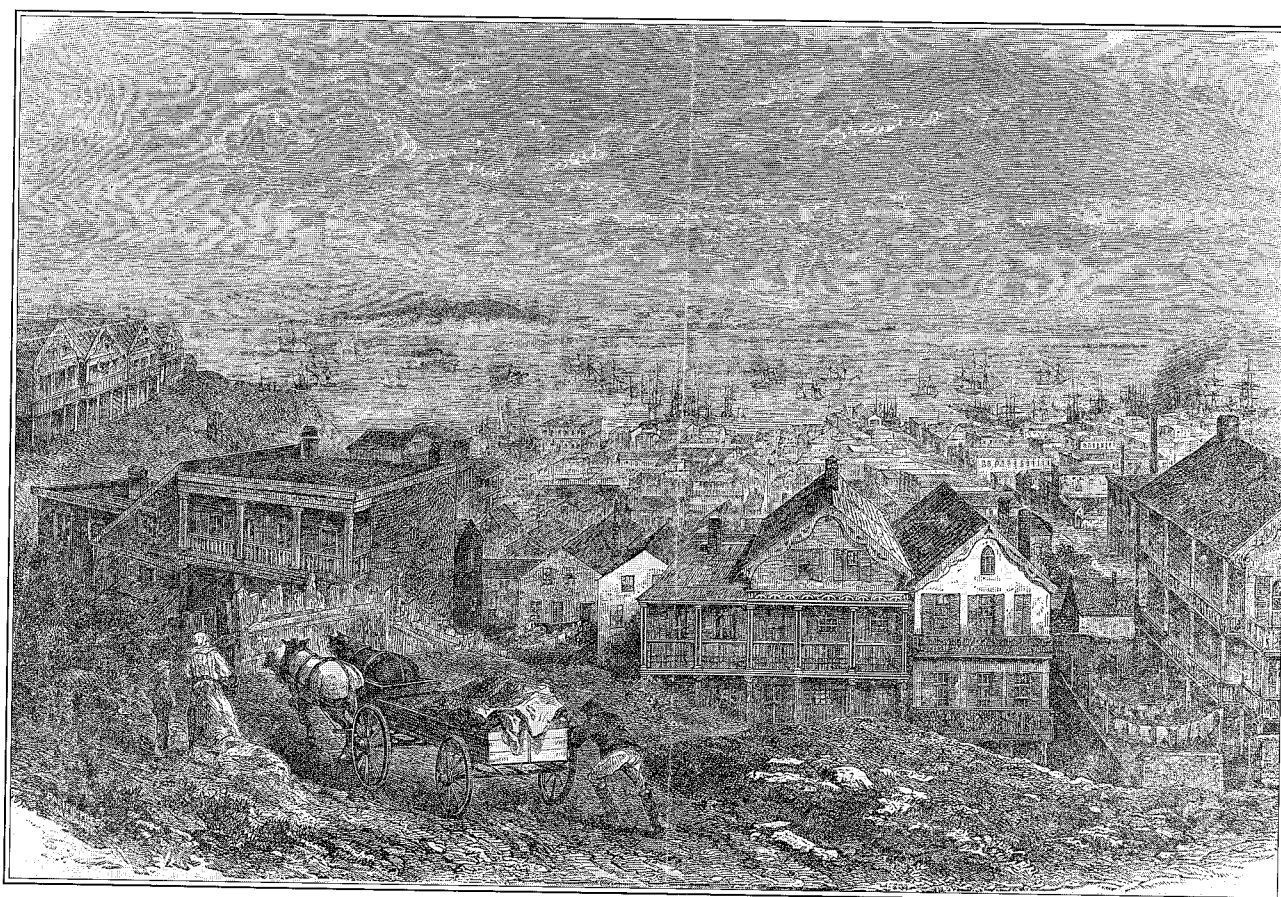


the scenic beauty and diversity of California. Indeed, his latest biographer fails even to mention it, while a recent, otherwise thorough, scholarly text on California history neglects to mention King at all, except in an obscure bibliographical citation.<sup>14</sup> Despite these omissions, King spoke and wrote enthusiastically about the natural scenery of California, just as he had done earlier about New Hampshire in his elaborately descriptive book, *The White Hills: Their Legends, Landscapes, and Poetry* (1860).<sup>15</sup> It is King the naturalist who deserves more recognition than formerly bestowed if one is to understand fully the personality and public role of this noble man who, in effect, sacrificed his life for a cause that he apparently believed should be as enduring as the Sierra and as majestic as the giant redwoods.

Obviously, King found more in California than a compelling political cause, a religious mission, a

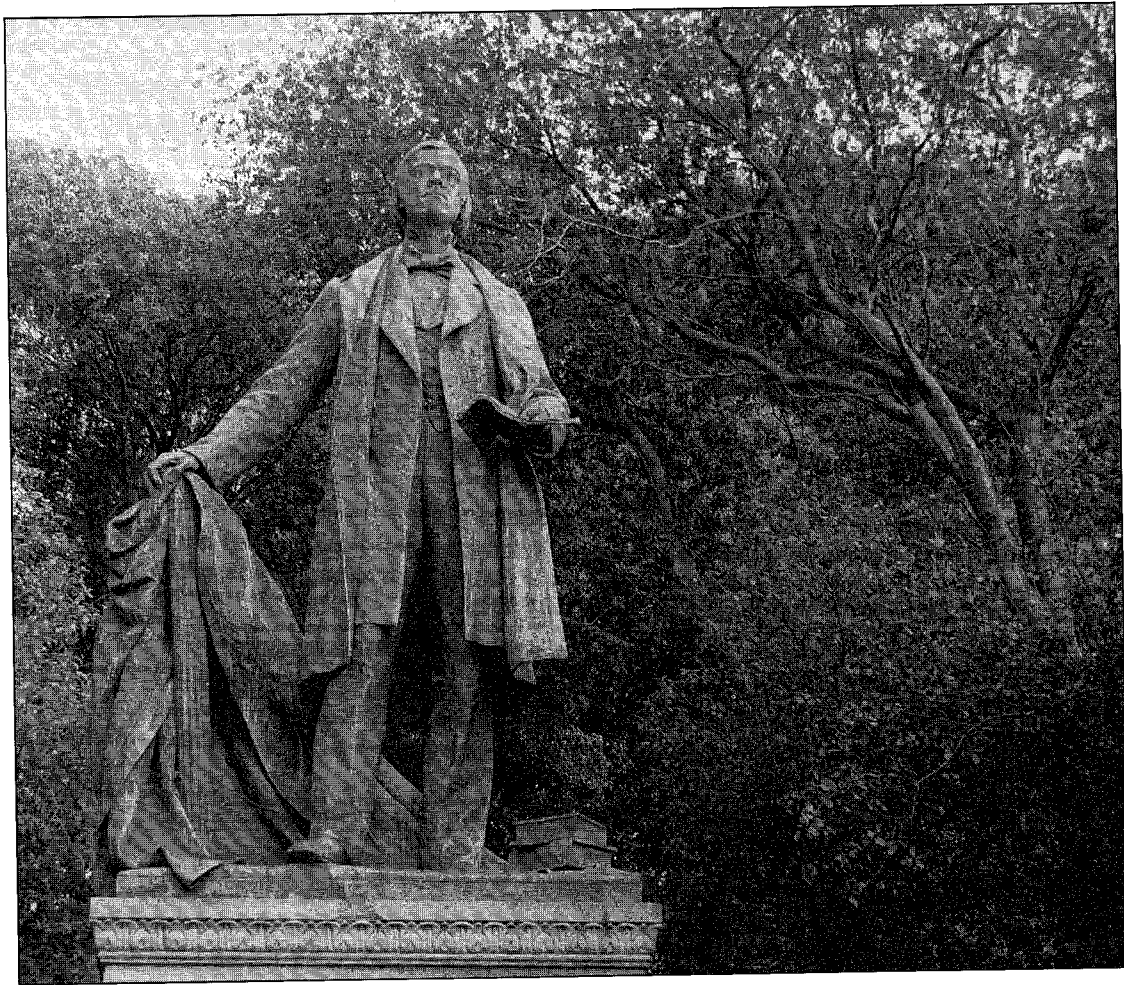
devoted congregation, and entry into San Francisco society, often accompanied by Jessie Benton Frémont, one of his many admirers.<sup>16</sup> Like John Muir, he was not one to lock himself up for long periods in solitary study. During his lecturing tours for the Union and the Sanitary Commission, he was greatly impressed by the scenic wilderness of northern California: "forests of pine and Sequoia lifting themselves to a height in itself on the verge of religious metaphor," as Kevin Starr has written.<sup>17</sup>

In a series of letters to the *Boston Transcript*, King educated his fellow easterners to the fact that California offered much more than gold. He was especially impressed by Yosemite, which appeared to be the sacred embodiment of the living God, thereby reflecting a Puritan New England outlook and the popular Transcendentalist philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and others. In July 1860, he entered Yosemite Valley



San Francisco as it appeared in the early 1860s, about the time Thomas Starr King arrived. Courtesy California State Library.





Donated to the city in 1892 by the Starr King Monument Committee, this statue of King sculpted by Daniel Chester French stands in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Courtesy of the Photography Center, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

and was overcome by its natural grandeur. According to Kevin Starr, who probably has written the best brief analysis of King, "The Yosemite seemed to King a revelation as compelling as Holy Writ. It was California's scripture of stone, calling for spiritual greatness."<sup>18</sup>

The enthusiastic mountaineer expressed these thoughts to his New England audience:

The Yosemite Valley is a pass about ten miles long, which at its eastern extremity, splits into three narrow notches, each of which extends several miles, winding by the wildest paths into the heart of the Sierra Nevada chain. For seven miles of the main valley, which varies in width from three-quarters of a mile to a mile and a half, the walls are from two thousand to nearly five thousand feet above the road and are nearly perpendicular. The valley is of such irregular width and bends so much, and often so abruptly that there is a great variety and frequent surprise in the forms and combinations of the overhanging rocks, as one rides along

the banks of the stream. The patches of luxuriant meadow with their dazzling green, and the grouping of the superb firs, two hundred feet high, that skirt them, and that shoot above the stout and graceful oaks and sycamores, are delightful nests of sweetness and beauty amid the threatening awfulness—like the threads and flashes of melody that relieve the towering masses of Beethoven's harmony. The Ninth Symphony is the Yosemite of music.<sup>19</sup>

With the virtual precision of a scientist and the metaphorical imagination of a poet, he described what Muir called "the grandeur of the Yosemite temple."<sup>20</sup>

King's admiration for California's natural beauty was not limited to Yosemite. During a visit to Ocean Beach near San Francisco in October 1861, he related the state's landscape to his political mission: "Our city turns her face persistently towards the East—signifying that California has no insane vision of independence; that she desires no isolated sway



over the Pacific, but is bound by loyalty to the empire whose flag she plants on Mendocino, the Hatteras of the West, and under which she has 'sucked of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hidden in the sand.' Read the figures of her recent vote and decide if I interpret her attitude wrongly."<sup>21</sup> Blending the cause of Union with bountiful nature, he skillfully argued the case for a permanent California connection.

His description of the wondrous beauty of springtime in the San Mateo, Sonoma, and Santa Clara valleys did not reveal subtle political motives, but pure ecstasy as he viewed the marvelous abundance of wild flowers and blossoming orchards radiating with color and charm.<sup>22</sup> According to one biographer, "he dilates on the giant spread of grape-vines with their clusters of purple and golden fruit, and the ripening treasure of the grainfields, more precious even than that of the mines; he discourses on cattle and horses and sheep."<sup>23</sup> Like Richard Henry Dana and others who preceded him to California from New England, he was impressed by the potential productivity of the California environment.<sup>24</sup>

Although he described in careful detail the mining industry of California, it appears that King could not fully conceal his moral reservations about its damage of nature by the sluicing, tunnelling, shafting, river fluming, gulching, crushing, and hydraulic tearing away of bluff and cañon wall, "by which the soil, the rock, the beds of powerful streams, and the hidden strain of a mountain's heart are made to yield the shining dust that was mixed with them ages ago."<sup>25</sup> Although he was not openly critical, perhaps given the importance of gold to the Union, and he was more a reporter than a judge in depicting mining, it seems inescapable that one as sensitive to nature as Starr King could not have felt the negative impact rendered by the ceaseless pounding and washing of God's green earth. Yet, surely his own personal investments must have tempered his attitude.

Mount Diablo in the San Francisco Bay area was another challenge and inspiration for the inveterate naturalist and mountain climber. Before ascending the mountain, he reflected on the beautiful foothills around him: "What gracefully moulded hills! What loveliness of dimples and shadows! What an exquisite tint of green, lighter and livelier than Nature wears in New England! What stripes and patches of flowers upon the slopes! What nobleness of trees flinging their shadows singly upon an acre of unbroken beauty of grain, or

entangling them as they fall from parks that are disturbed by no underbrush."<sup>26</sup> Upon ascending the peak, he observed: "Nowhere in Europe can such a vast mountain line be seen as Diablo showed us on that clear day. And what a vast extent of territory! Our scientific companions of the Survey by their instruments and sober reckoning discovered that within the range of our vision lay an expanse of 46,000 square miles! An area as large as the State of New York! And this but little more than a quarter of California."<sup>27</sup> King undoubtedly was referring to the California State Geological Survey (1860-64), members of which included W.H. Brewer, Clarence King, and J.D. Whitney.<sup>28</sup>

A vacation trip to the Sierra inspired Starr King to measure the magnificence of the Mariposa Trees by religious metaphor. One tree left a distinct impression on him:

How majestic it swelled and towered! My companion and I both exclaimed, "This is the largest tree we have yet seen; this will measure more than a hundred feet in girth." We gazed for a long time at its soaring stem, from which, a hundred feet above us, the branches that shot out bent suddenly upwards, like the pictures of the golden candlesticks in the Hebrew temple. It seemed profane to put a measuring tape upon such a piece of organized sublimity. But we made the trial. It was just fifty-six feet in circuit—but little more than half the size of the Monarchs in Mariposa which it seemed to excel so much in majesty. There were a hundred trees in the Mariposa grove larger than this, and all of them together did not make half the impression on me that this one stamped into the brain at first sight. We need to see the "Mother of the Forest," for instance, towering over Trinity Church in New York, and overtopping its spire with a column whose life is older than the doctrine of the Trinity, to appreciate its vastness.<sup>29</sup>

The age as well as the sheer size of the Mariposa Grove intrigued King. On one occasion, as he looked up from the forest floor, he virtually commanded the trees to confide in him. Like restrained ladies of the early Victorian era, they answered only with silence:

Why cannot the dumb column now be confidential? There comes a breath of wind cooled by the snow on higher swells of the Sierras, which can be seen from the western edge of the grove;—why will not the old patriarch take advantage of that ripple through his leaves and whisper to me his age? Are you as old as Noah? Do you span the centuries as far as Moses? Can you remember the time of Solomon? Were you planted before the seed of



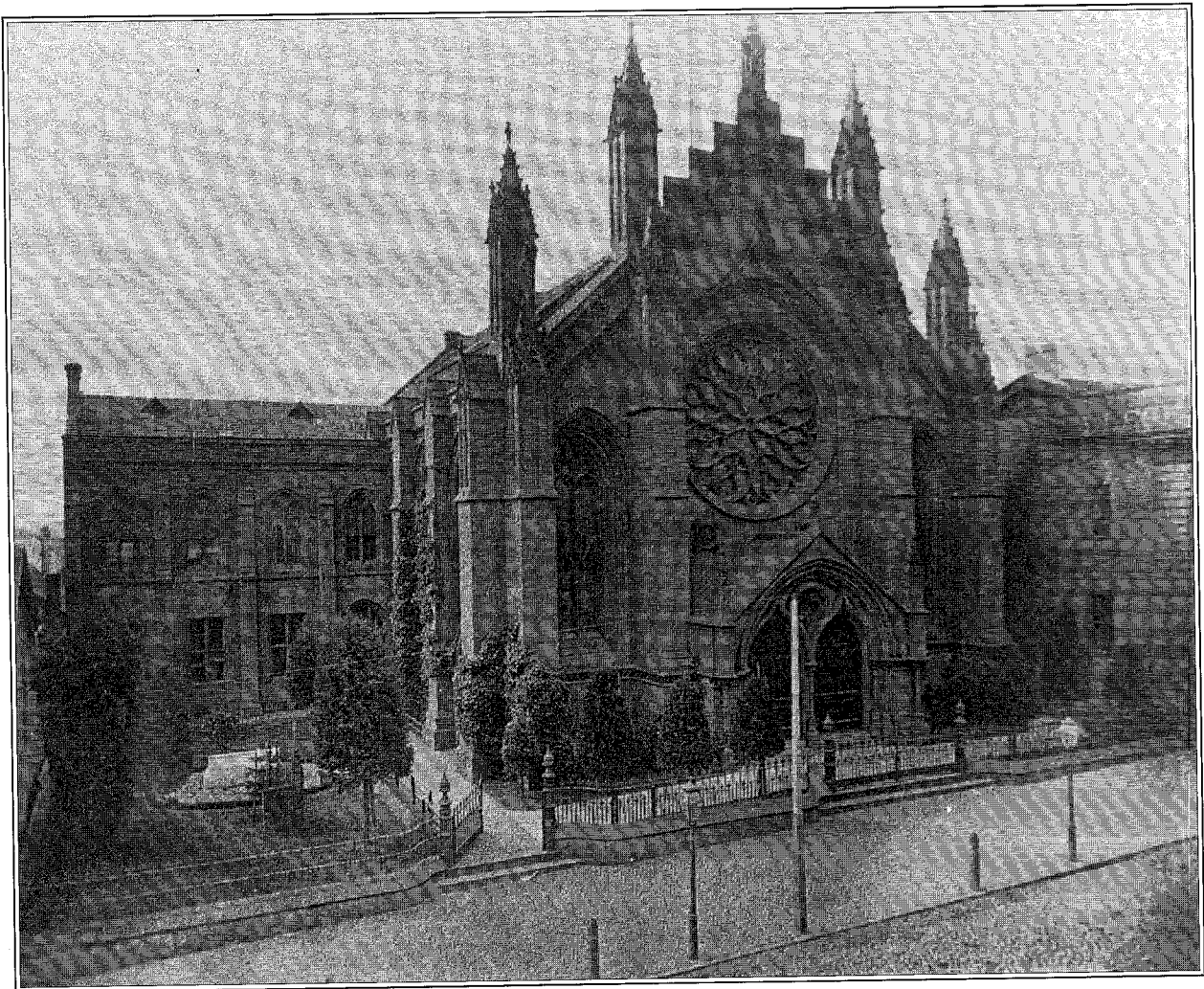
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Rome took root in Italy? At any rate tell me whether or not your birth belongs to the Christian centuries, whether we must write B.C. or A.D. against your infancy? I promised the stalwart greybeard I would tell nobody, or at most only the *Transcript*, if he would drop into my ear the hour of his nativity.<sup>30</sup>

King did not attempt to converse only with trees. His extensive travels among them enabled him to infuse his sermons with the beauty and divinity of nature, apparently filling his responsive congregation with a love of the outdoors as an expression of divine grace. As he spoke, "so many of us there are who have no majestic landscapes for the heart—no grandeur in the inner life. We live

on the flats. We live in a moral country, which is dry, droughty, barren. We look up to the heights whence shadow falls and streams flow singing. We have no consciousness of Divine, All-enfolding Love."<sup>31</sup>

For Californians with a gold-rush mentality, who were used to abusing nature, especially in mining, King's message must have been fresh and probably startling. In it can be seen the religious definition of the environment that moved John Muir to sustain the demanding, life-sapping struggle to save the beautiful Hetch Hetchy Valley near Yosemite from the San Francisco dam-building water-seekers.<sup>32</sup> Although Californians would not relinquish their quest for growth and materialism in King's



First Unitarian Church of San Francisco, 1865, showing in the side yard the newly placed sarcophagus of Thomas Starr King. *Courtesy First Unitarian Church of San Francisco.*





Mt. Starr King, Yosemite National Park. *Courtesy First Unitarian Church of San Francisco.*

day or in Muir's, perhaps the energetic preacher from staid old Boston nonetheless lifted their popular consciousness, however temporarily, toward an appreciation of the God-given grandeur of the natural environment as a place not to be feared or ravaged, but revered. Such thoughts were incorporated in his lively political speeches and sermons, thereby giving Californians a greater sense of their destiny as a permanent part of the Union.

Some of Thomas Starr King's addresses drew upon geographical themes, such as "Lessons from the Sierra Nevada" and "Living Waters from Lake Tahoe." According to one student, "He

discovered the mountains and redwoods, which inspired his Yankee imagination with yearnings for 'Yosemites of the soul.'"<sup>33</sup> Thirty years before John Muir and his fellow naturalists founded the Sierra Club in California, King was writing and speaking eloquently, if not rapturously, about the natural splendor of the state. In fact, in Kevin Starr's opinion, Muir's *Yosemite*, published in 1912, "was the book Thomas Starr King had dreamed of writing in 1860."<sup>34</sup> Indeed, according to the *Alta California* for March 5, 1864, King's manuscript on Yosemite was nearly complete at the time of his death. His interest in such natural wonders was later commemorated with a mountain named for





Thomas Starr King and Father Junípero Serra were chosen to represent the state of California in the Statuary Hall in the Capitol, Washington, D. C. King's statue, in bronze, is the work of sculptor Haig Patigian, 1930. *Courtesy First Unitarian Church of San Francisco.*



him in his beloved Yosemite and a redwood in the haunting Mariposa Grove.<sup>35</sup> These honors testify that King was a man of many visions, who not only anticipated the teachings of the much more famous Muir, but educated Californians and easterners alike to the fact that California's harvest was not exclusively golden. As one scholar suggests, King's early visit to Yosemite in 1860 and the letters he wrote about its scenic beauty helped the public to realize that "the treasures of Yosemite should be public property, not to be lavished upon a few for personal gain." In fact, "such was his fame and influence that these letters had a wide audience in the East with a substantial effect upon Yosemite's destiny."<sup>36</sup> In 1864, the year King died, Frederick Law Olmsted, the nation's leading landscape architect and developer of New York City's Central Park, and such politically influential individuals as San Francisco businessman Israel Ward Raymond pressured Congress and President Lincoln into granting the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to the state for preservation.<sup>37</sup>

As news of King's untimely death spread in California, businesses, the United States Mint, government offices, and the courts closed. The state legislature adjourned for three days. In the East, his friends John G. Whittier, and in the West, Bret Harte, commemorated him in poems. His portrait was hung in the Sacramento State House, and in resolutions passed by the legislature he was described as "the man whose matchless oratory saved California for the Union."<sup>38</sup> Without discounting his political role, it should also be remembered that he travelled, spoke, and wrote just as diligently to save California's scenic beauty for future generations. His fellow clergyman and friend, Reverend Henry Bellows wrote from New York on March 5, 1864: "The mountains he loved and praised are henceforth his monuments and his mourners. The

White Hills and the Sierra Nevada are, to-day, wrapped in his shroud. His dirge will be perpetually heard in their forests."<sup>39</sup>

If Californians learned from Muir a "love of their land, wild and lyrical," King had earlier facilitated their education, even at a time when the Civil War distracted many from environmental concerns.<sup>40</sup> King's environmentalism as much as his political and humanitarian contributions is the lasting legacy of a man who was much more appreciated and known in his own day than in ours. In King, more than in the controversial, overstated explorer, John C. Frémont, Californians truly had found a man to match their mountains.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps this is why they chose to remember him with a bronze statue by Daniel Chester French in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, amidst the trees and vegetation that so enriched his life and the lives of others.<sup>42</sup> By mid-nineteenth-century standards, King combined the eloquence and practicality of a politician with the aestheticism of a naturalist and the compassion of a clergyman. Undoubtedly the secret of his success, his ability to fuse effectively these forces, explained why in "four years he had become one of the best known and most beloved men on the Pacific Coast."<sup>43</sup>

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See notes beginning on page 79.

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# A Fresh Voice from the West:

## MARY AUSTIN, CALIFORNIA, AND AMERICAN LITERARY MAGAZINES, 1892-1910

by Karen S. Langlois

The western writer Mary Hunter Austin is now best remembered as the author of over thirty books, beginning with her California classic, *The Land of Little Rain* (1903). However, like many authors of her time, she began her literary career in the 1890s as a writer for American literary magazines.<sup>1</sup> In the years between 1892 and 1910 her magazine pieces on California provided a major share of her recognition and income. Utilizing material about frontier life, she established a reputation as an important regional writer and as a significant contributor to western literary realism.

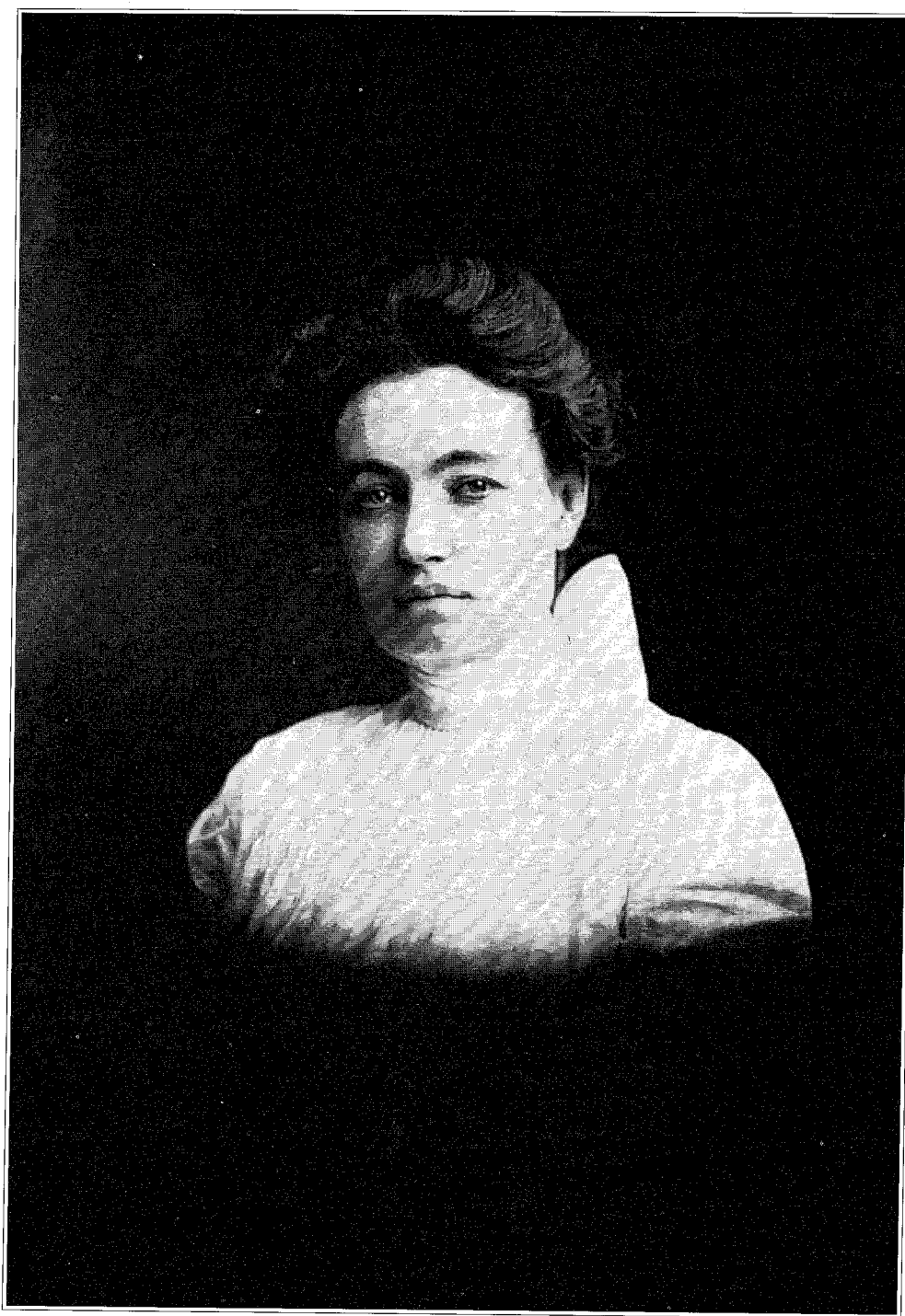
"Magazines, magazines, magazines!" the *National Magazine* complained in 1897. "The news-stands are already groaning under the heavy load, and there are still more coming."<sup>2</sup> Magazines—sold on newspaper stands, in railway stations, and by subscription—were an American institution. Half-tone plates, which had replaced fine line engraving on wood, had reduced costs and helped make illustrated periodicals available to the masses. Moreover, the tripling of the national economy resulted in a publishing boom between 1880 and 1910. By 1908 more than half of the total weight of all mail was comprised of newspapers and magazines.<sup>3</sup> The popularity of illustrated literary magazines created a constant market for writers, and offered the incentive of steadily rising incomes, along with increased exposure.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the

magazine stories of Bret Harte greatly contributed to the image of the California frontier in the popular mind. During the 1860s and 1870s, he became an important figure in American literature with the publication of such stories as "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." Indeed, before Mary Austin's arrival in California in 1888, her own limited knowledge of the West had been largely formed by the work of Bret Harte, the charming sentimentalist of the Sierra.<sup>4</sup>

Mary Hunter was born in the small mid-western town of Carlinville, Illinois, in 1868. She attended local schools and Blackburn College, a small denominational institution. While at Blackburn, she published short pieces in the college literary magazine, the *Blackburnian*, and was honored as poet laureate of her graduating class. Shortly after graduation, she traveled west by train with her brother and widowed mother. In California the family struggled in an ill-fated attempt to homestead arid range land in Tejon Pass at the edge of the Mojave Desert. There, Mary Hunter began to collect material for her future stories. In 1891 she married Wallace Stafford Austin, a vineyardist and speculator. Forced north by a series of financial failures, the couple relocated to Lone Pine in the Owens River Valley. The birth of a retarded daughter, Ruth, added to the harsh difficulties of life on the California frontier.





Only twenty-eight years old at the time of this studio portrait in 1896, Mary Hunter Austin was just beginning to achieve critical acclaim for her writing. *Courtesy Huntington Library.*





The arid Owens Valley, where Austin settled briefly with her husband in the early 1890s, inspired her many sensitive regional sketches. This turn-of-the-century photograph captures the Sierra Nevada range to the west. *Courtesy Huntington Library.*

Austin's literary career began with the appearance of her short pieces in two regional periodicals, the *Overland Monthly* and *Out West*. The *Overland Monthly* had been founded in 1868, the year of her birth. Begun by Anton Roman, a San Francisco bookseller and printer, the magazine was a "pioneer in the development of Pacific Coast magazine publishing."<sup>5</sup> With Bret Harte, Ina Coolbrith, and Charles Warren Stoddard among its contributors, it achieved recognition as "the only first class illustrated monthly magazine published west of the Mississippi." Indeed, their names, according to Austin, "made a starry cluster . . . which no Californian at the time failed to maintain was equal in luster to any literary trinity of the envious East."<sup>6</sup>

Referred to as the *Atlantic Monthly* of the West, the *Overland Monthly* was nationally known for its tales of the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra, and the sunny Pacific shore. The magazine had a subscrip-

tion rate of \$1.00 a year, or ten cents per issue. Its cover picture, a California grizzly bear, his feet planted on iron rails and snarling muzzle facing an approaching locomotive, symbolized the western spirit of independence, as well as the end of the frontier. By 1892, when Austin first visited the *Overland's* San Francisco offices, the magazine had lost some of the former glory it had enjoyed under the editorship of Bret Harte. Nevertheless, it was, she recalled, "undergoing one of the periodic revivals to which, between California's native indifference to literature and its prideful sense of the magazine as a cultural asset, it was subject."<sup>7</sup>

The editors of the *Overland*, who published only original material, had difficulty finding suitable stories and poetry, and Austin's submissions were immediately accepted for publication. Thus she joined the group of aspiring women writers whose regional fiction graced its pages, a group that



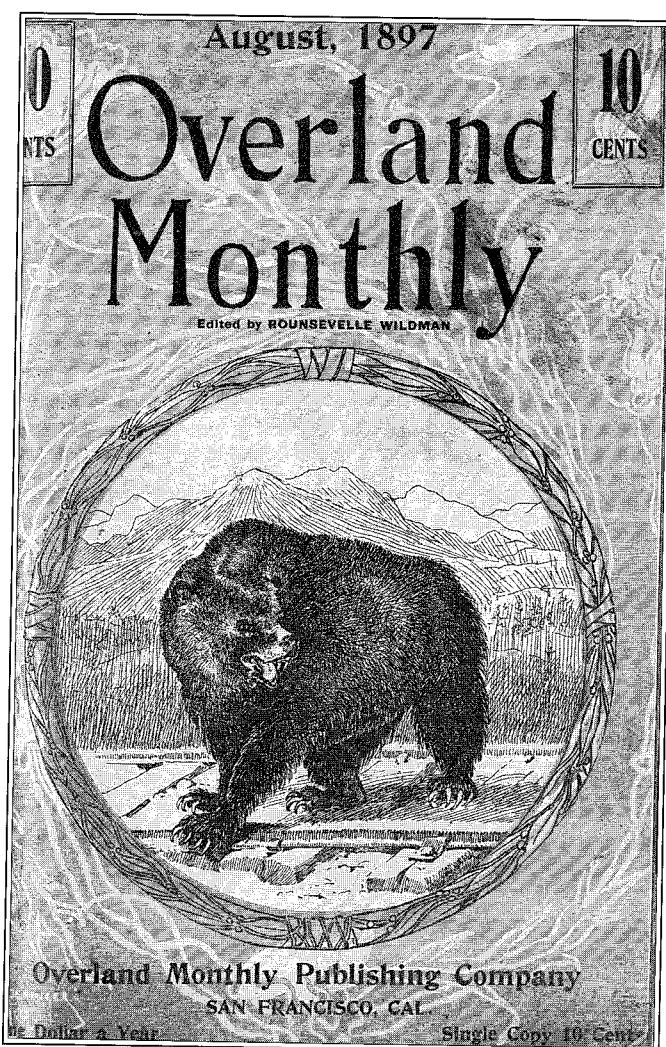
included Mabel Porter Pitts, Grace Helen Bailey, and Mabel Houghton Brown. Over the next five years the *Overland Monthly* published three of Austin's short stories, which were based on material she had gathered in California. The first, "The Mother of Felipe," appeared in November 1892. Set in Antelope Valley, it is the sentimental story of an Hispanic woman's devotion to the memory of her dead son. It contains the vivid descriptions of the California desert that won Austin critical recognition as an important new writer. The desert was, she wrote in the story,

... a country to be avoided by the solitary traveler, with its hard, inhospitable soil, and its vast monotony of contour and color. A country sublime in its immensity of light, and soft unvarying tints, —fawn, and olive, and pearl, with glistening stretches of white sand, and brown hollows

between the hills, out of which the gray and purple shadows creep at night. A country laid visibly under the ban of eternal silence.

Austin's second story, "The Wooing of the Senorita," the tale of a naive easterner, Millard Travis, and his encounter with a California señorita and her cattle rustling lover, appeared in March 1897. It was followed in October by a third piece, "The Conversion of Ah Lew Sing," a humorous account of a Chinese truck gardener. These stories, published over a period of five years, were the foundation for the work that would soon establish Mary Austin's reputation in some quarters as "the first truly prominent woman writer from the American West."<sup>8</sup>

In addition to short stories, the *Overland Monthly* published local-color poetry by many women writers, among them Carrie Walter, whose work from



Founded in 1868, the *Overland Monthly* was not California's first illustrated monthly magazine, but under the editorship of Bret Harte and his successors it became the best known and highest regarded publication west of the Mississippi. The *Overland* published three of Mary Austin's short stories between 1892 and 1897, helping to launch her reputation as one of early California's prominent writers. Courtesy Huntington Library.

this period appeared in her 1907 collection, *Rose-ashes, and Other Poems*. Perhaps the periodical's best known verse was by Ina Coolbrith, who was, according to Mary Austin, "not only the first, but for a long time the only, woman poet of the Coast country whose verse found welcome in the Eastern magazines."<sup>9</sup> Austin's poem, "Inyo," published in the *Overland Monthly* in July 1899, brings to mind the imagery that would make her first published book, *The Land of Little Rain*, a masterpiece of western writing:

Like some great lioness beside the river,  
With passion slumbering in her half-shut eyes,  
Watching the light from heated sands up-quiver,  
Untamed and barren, lone the valley lies.

"Inyo" and Austin's later poems compare favor-

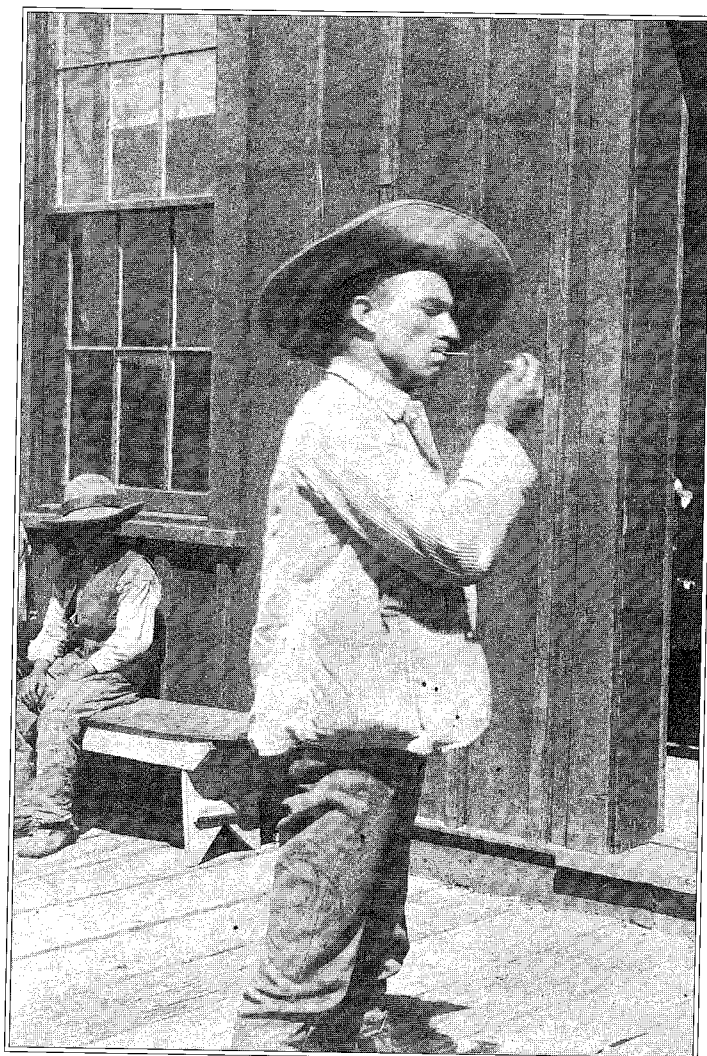
ably to other local-color verse of the time. A. B. Nye, a contemporary who sought permission to include "Inyo" in an anthology of California verse, complimented her on her talents as a poet and mused that the immense, mountain-haunted stretches of the Owens Valley were "a portion of California which, until you began to write, had neither poets nor prophets of literature to proclaim it."<sup>10</sup>

In 1899 Mary Austin moved to Los Angeles, where she met Charles Lummis, an authority on the Southwest and the editor of the *Land of Sunshine*, an emerging southern California magazine. She became a member of the literary salon that met in the Lummis home on the Arroyo Seco, and her new circle encouraged her literary aspirations. Well known for his part in the literary discovery of the

Founded in Los Angeles in 1894 to promote southern California, the illustrated monthly *Land of Sunshine* broadened under Charles F. Lummis's editorship and in 1902 was renamed *Out West*, as a reflection of its expanded scope.  
*Courtesy Huntington Library.*







Charles F. Lummis as a young man, photographed in New Mexico, ca. 1888-91, where he went to recover from a stroke. He returned to Los Angeles, where in 1894 he became editor of *Land of Sunshine*.  
Courtesy California State Library.

West, Lummis had mentored several literary talents. His salon attracted a number of women writers—such as Gwendolen Overton, Margaret Collier Graham, and Lummis's assistant editor, Sharlott Hall—who seemed to Austin to have "made a place for themselves in the Eastern magazines."<sup>11</sup> Lummis's "syndicate of western writers" also included Grace Ellery Channing, Mary Hallock Foote, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Theodore Hittell, David Starr Jordan, and Edwin Markham.

Begun in 1894, the *Land of Sunshine* was an illustrated monthly that extolled southern California's cultural and commercial aspects. As Charles Lummis explained, "Southern California grows brains as well as oranges."<sup>12</sup> With a subscription rate of \$1.00 per year and a nationwide circulation of over 10,000, the magazine included at least one short story in every issue. Distinctively western in

flavor, its cover featured a picture of a mountain lion sprawled on a ledge, a golden sun framing its head.

At the Lummis home, Austin recalled, she "came and went, writing, writing."<sup>13</sup> Her regional poetry was soon appearing in the *Land of Sunshine* alongside articles on "The Old Missions" and "Pioneer California Schools" and advertisements for local wines, the Southern Pacific Company, and the Mount Lowe Railway. An excerpt from her poem, "A Twilight Hill," published in March 1901, celebrates the Arroyo Seco landscape at dusk.

It is the season when the streamlets sing,  
Sweet and misty censers do the grape vines swing,  
And at their thresholds birds are gossiping  
While holds the lengthening light.  
And there the blundering night-moth doth disclose  
The scented hollow where the current grows,

And there the musky bloom of gilia glows  
Like nuns at prayer, milk-white.

Lummis appointed Mary Austin to the staff of the magazine and renamed it *Out West* in 1902 to signify its expanding scope. Austin published seven poems, four short stories, a serialized novelette, and one essay in his magazine. She was one of the most talented writers published in its pages.

On Lummis's advice Austin sent some of her poems to the *St. Nicholas*, the finest magazine for children published in the United States, which had published some of his short pieces. The periodical's editor, Mary Mapes Dodge, was an experienced writer and editor, a woman of considerable influence in a male-dominated industry, who exercised "absolute control over the magazine" and was committed to quality. She believed *St. Nicholas* should be "stronger, truer, bolder [and] more uncompromising" than adult periodicals.<sup>14</sup> Her high artistic and literary standards earned *St. Nicholas* an enduring reputation.

Backed by a prosperous publishing house, the Century Company, *St. Nicholas* had a circulation of 70,000 and paid well enough to attract leading writers, including Jack London and Mark Twain. Many of Louisa May Alcott's stories appeared in *St. Nicholas* during her lifetime, and her work was still appearing posthumously in the early 1900s. With a subscription rate of \$3.00 a year, or twenty-five cents per issue, the magazine was more expensive than many adult periodicals.

Mary Austin had been "brought up" on *St. Nicholas* stories as a child and as an adult she recalled that "the best of everything always appeared in *St. Nicholas* and the best of everything was always explicitly localized." A sense of locale was very important in children's literature, she explained, for children are "at heart the most confirmed regionalists."<sup>15</sup> Beginning in 1900 she published a series of regional poems in *St. Nicholas*, many of them about California animals. They include "The Rocky Mountain Sheep," "The Sand Hill Crane," and "The Rhyme of the Pronghorns"—poems that later appeared in her collection of regional poetry, *The Children Sing in the Far West*.

*St. Nicholas* was as "well illustrated as the best adult magazines," and Austin's poems had been imaginatively illustrated by Bruce Horsfall. When she proposed her book of regional poetry to Houghton Mifflin Company, she urged them to "get the *St. Nicholas* illustrations if you can. They have one of Rocky Mountain sheep which would make the fortune of any book. It is the best drawing for a wild animal in its native haunt that I have seen."<sup>16</sup>

Mary Mapes Dodge also welcomed submissions about Native American culture. In "The Deer Star," a poem that appeared in the February 1901 issue of *St. Nicholas*, Austin used a California Paiute legend regarding the origin of a star "that may be seen low in the eastern sky about sunrise of summer mornings." The poem tells how a young Indian hunter and a deer are transformed into the bright star, Sirius. It concludes:

They have gone by the painted desert,  
Where the dawn mists lie uncurled,  
And over the purple ranges  
On the outer rim of the world.  
The people shout from the village,  
And the sun gets up to spy  
The royal deer and the runner,  
Clear shining in the sky.  
And ever the hunter watches for the rising of  
that star  
When he comes by the summer mountains  
where the haunts of the red deer are,  
When he comes by the morning meadows where  
the young of the red deer hide;  
He fares him forth to the hunting while the deer  
and the runner bide.

Austin's long-hoped-for entrance into the mainstream of American magazine publishing came in the Boston-based *Atlantic Monthly*, which in July 1900 published "The Shepherd of the Sierras," a sentimental story about a California shepherd who rescues a coyote trapped in a forest fire. Founded in 1857, the *Atlantic Monthly* was one of the nation's most distinguished literary periodicals. An early editor, William Dean Howells, had broadened the scope of the magazine. "Without ceasing to be New England, without ceasing to be Bostonian, at heart . . ." he observed, "[we have] become southern, mid-western, and far-western in our sympathies."<sup>17</sup> With a subscription price of \$4.00 a year, the *Atlantic* was a high-quality, adult periodical designed to appeal to the genteel, affluent, reading public.

It was at this time that Mary Austin began experimenting with story sketches or essays. During a period of loneliness and ill health at her home in the Owens Valley town of Independence, when she was "languid with convalescence," she started to write about the landscape and inhabitants of the eastern California desert. She remembered the moment as "one of those thin days when the stark energies of the land threaten just under its surfaces."<sup>18</sup> Six of her sketches of desert life were subsequently accepted by current editor Bliss Perry for publication in the *Atlantic Monthly*, including "The Land of Little Rain," which later became the



title piece of her 1903 classic book. As Perry wrote, "It is not often that prose sketches of outdoor life have given us such unalloyed pleasure."<sup>19</sup>

Austin's first essay published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Jimville: A Bret Harte Town," debuted in November 1902, well before its appearance in *The Land of Little Rain*. This was a standard practice in American publishing, where there was a natural flow of material between the magazines and books. By the 1890s, according to one historian, many writers had come "to devote a major share of their time to the preparation of magazine material, with ultimate printing in book form often in mind, but with magazine publication the direct first object."<sup>20</sup> Many books, including *The Land of Little Rain*, Mary Austin's signature work, first acquired recognition through their appearance in literary magazines, which helped in book promotion.

Austin's first publication in the mass circulation

market appeared in the *Black Cat*, America's leading short story periodical for amateur writers. Begun in 1895 by advertiser Herman D. Umbstaetter, the magazine sold for a nickel a copy and had a circulation of over 150,000. It attracted many beginning writers through contests that awarded an expense-paid trip around the world to the author of the best short story. In March 1899 the *Black Cat*, which had also published Jack London's early efforts, ran Mary Austin's story, "The Castro Baby," a tale of a California town's compassionate concern for a young Hispanic mother.

Austin followed this effort by selling western material to other mass circulation magazines such as the *Youth's Companion* and *Munsey's*, which had the highest circulation of any magazine in the world. *Munsey's* was an important market for the short story and the storiette, a type of short, short story that had developed in the 1890s. Among regular

## NIGHT WIND, WAKE!

By MARY AUSTIN.

NIGHT Wind wake! now the cattle leave the trail for us,  
Huddled on the hill slope by the stony water-scar,  
Get you down along the steep  
Where the moon-eyed gilas keep,  
To go walking in the meadows—  
Silver runnels in the meadows—  
Where the blossoms star the shadows and the hidden waters are.

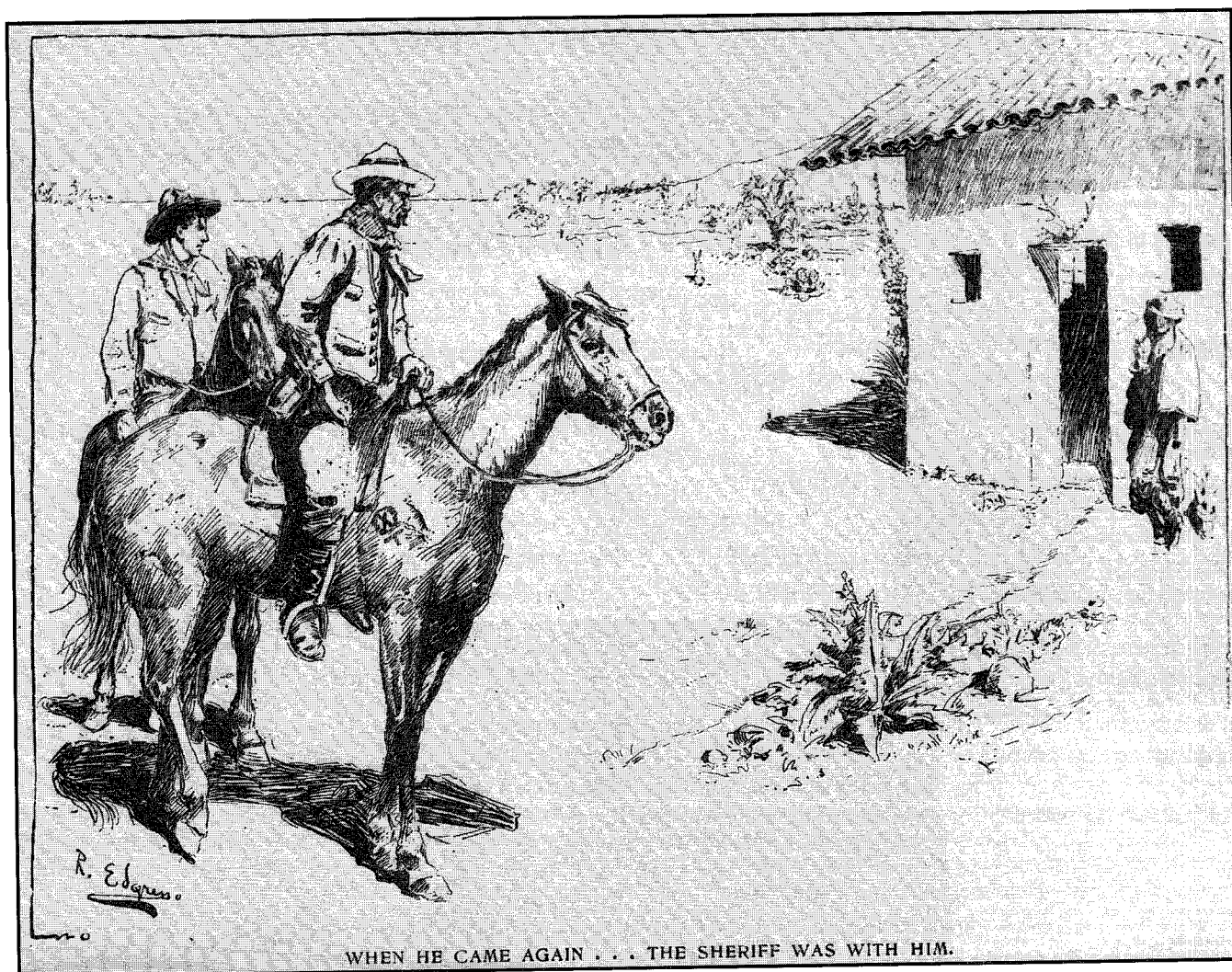
Night Wind wake! now the laden vine is calling us,  
Calling with the incense of its green and misty blooms,  
Now the milk-white alders quake  
Where the dark lies like a lake  
On the musky scented meadows,  
On the many-lilied meadows,  
On the chilly mountain meadows where the throaty hylas  
blooms.

Night Wind wake! I am coming up the trail to you,  
Up and past the gullies where the midnight shadows lair  
Past the tangle by the creek  
Where the trail is all to seek,  
To the damp and dusky meadows,  
To the willow-skirted meadows,  
To go walking in the meadows with the pleasant Night Wind  
there.

Independence, Cal.

"Night Wind, Wake!" appeared in *Out West* in April 1904. Courtesy Huntington Library.





WHEN HE CAME AGAIN . . . THE SHERIFF WAS WITH HIM.

Artist Richard Edgren illustrated Austin's story, "The Wooing of the Senorita," in this line drawing for the *Overland Monthly*, March 1897. Courtesy Huntington Library.

contributors were two sisters, Grace and Alice MacGowan, whom Mary Austin met in the bohemian literary colony of Carmel, California. *Munsey's* accepted two of Austin's desert stories featuring Indian women as central characters—"The Pot of Gold," which appeared in July 1901, and the "White Hour," published in April 1903.

In an *Atlantic Monthly* article on the short story, published in 1902, editor Bliss Perry commented upon "the present popularity of the short story

with authors and the public alike." "It is obvious . . . that the short story gives a young writer the most valuable experience at the least loss of time," he wrote. "He can test his fortune with the public with the magazines, without waiting to write his immortal book." Furthermore, he noted, "the author is often paid as much for a story as he earns from the copyrights of a novel, and it costs him one tenth the labor." In contrast to the essay and the poem, the "short story now holds the field . . . We



are children at bottom, after all is said, children under the story-teller's charm."<sup>21</sup>

Mary Austin's early short fiction generally conformed to the standard pattern of the short story in the late nineteenth century. She frequently relied on western stereotypes for characterizations and on local color for fundamental plot elements. On the popularity of local color, which emphasized the peculiarities of a particular region, she reflected, "The more highly colored the better, and you might take as much space as you wanted for elucidating that color and spread it on as thickly as you liked."<sup>22</sup> In some regional stories there was an atmosphere so "drenched with local color," she wrote, that the reader was "thoroughly sloshed" with it. Many of her own early stories were of this sentimental type popular in the Victorian era. But Austin also patterned some of her work after the more "modern" style of the popular British writer Rudyard Kipling, "with their slightly mocking detachment, [and] their air of completely disengaging the author from any responsibility for the moral implications of the scene and the people of whom he wrote." These stories, she wrote, "pointed the way for a use of the sort of material of which I found myself possessed."<sup>23</sup>

Austin's magazine stories immortalized the individuals she met on the vanishing California frontier, such as Seyavi, the aging Paiute "Basket Maker," "who made baskets for love and sold them for money"; the independent Mrs. Walker, the twisted "Walking Woman," who "had walked off all sense of society-made values"; and the solitary "Pocket Hunter," who talked of "the water of mirage rolling like quick silver in the hollows." She incorporated her knowledge of California Indian life in stories such as "Pahawitz-Na'an" and "Mahala Joe." Hispanic culture formed the milieu of "The Kiss of Niño Dios," and "The Christmas Fiddle." The lore of miners and buried treasure provided the plots for "The Lost Mine of Fisherman's Peak" and "The Golden Fortune." Austin's fascination with the California sheepherding industry gave impetus to such stories as "The Little Coyote" and "The Ford of Crevecoeur."

Much of Austin's knowledge about California grew from personal experience. While living in Tejon, she recalled, her family "visited every point of interest that could possibly be reached by wagon or on horseback."<sup>24</sup> On her writer's gift for observation, she confided, "there is really nothing to tell. I have just *looked*, nothing more . . . and by and by I got to know when and where looking was most

worthwhile. Then I got so full of looking that I had to write to get rid of some of it and make room for more."<sup>25</sup> If many of her desert tales set on the ragged edge of civilization seemed unreal, she explained, "Out there, where the boundary of soul and sense is as faint as a trail in a sand-storm, I have seen things happen that I do not believe myself."<sup>26</sup> Concerning her first collection of Indian stories, she assured, "All of these stories are so nearly true, that you need not be troubled in the least about believing them."<sup>27</sup>

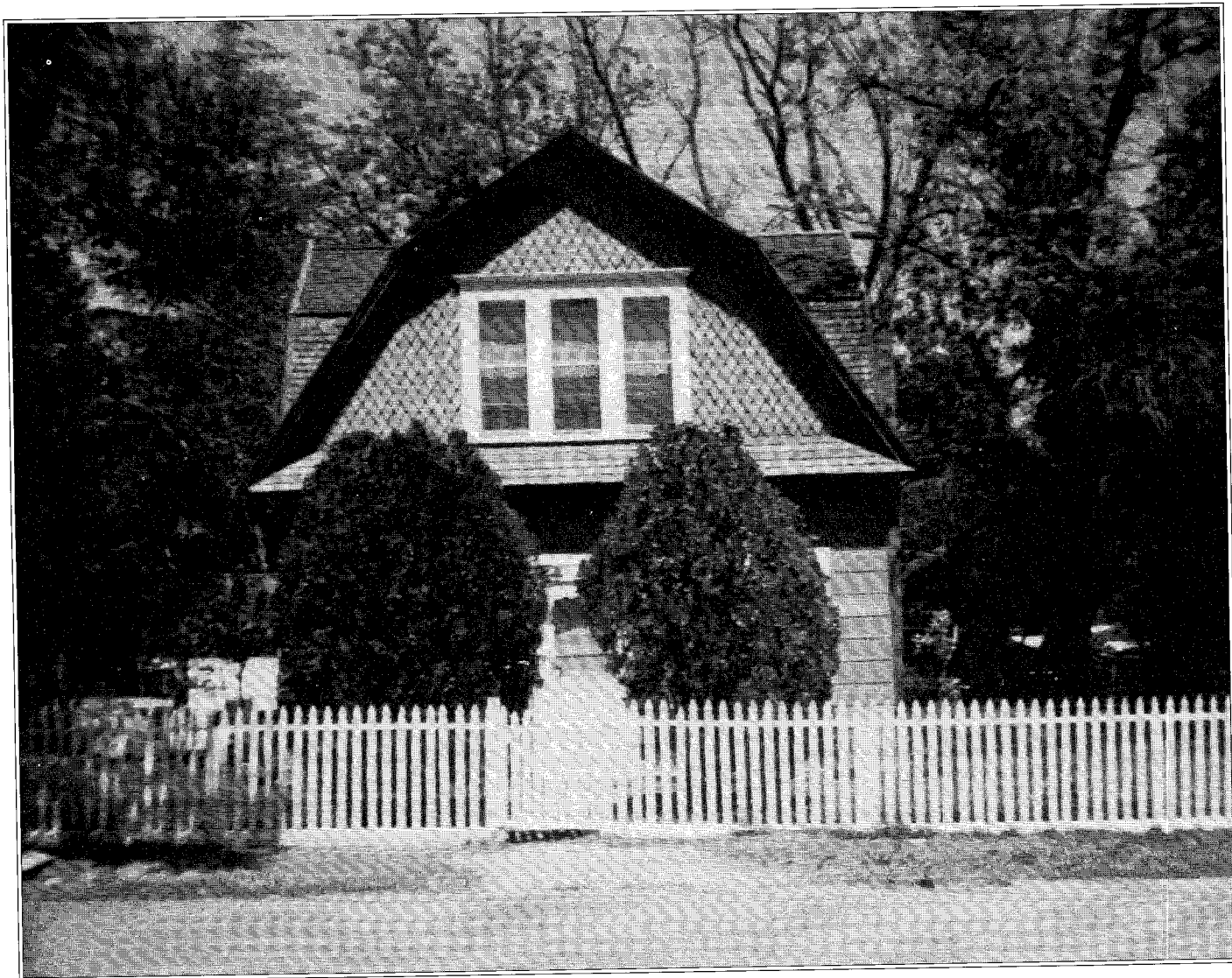
Many of Mary Austin's tales were picked up from townspeople like Mrs. Dodge, the talkative landlady, or from the proprietor of the Lone Pine saloon, "a friendly soul . . . who would lean over the portal and gossip." Other stories came by way of conversations with desert old-timers, from her visits to Indian "campoodies," and from all-night rides on the old Mojave stage. As Austin recalled, "among purveyors of story material, stage-coach drivers bears the palm." On riding the stagecoach, Austin wrote,

. . . [I] was always able to secure the outside seat. No matter how many times . . . [I] had been over the road, . . . [I] was always ready to hear the tale again and could give story for story, besides being well provided with baskets of fruit and chocolate layer cake and such-like comestibles as while away the midnight hours, for the trip was always made of one continual stretch of twenty-six hours with eighteen-mile relays.<sup>28</sup>

It was, she confided, "from dropped hints of talk, reminiscence and speculation, [that] one gathers the gist of more tales, and better, than are written."<sup>29</sup> Her favorite stories were folk stories, such as those told to her by the Paiute "Basket Woman," who claimed she "had seen Coyote-Spirits herself."<sup>30</sup> But whether they were Indian myths, or the lore of California miners and sheepherders, Mary Austin's stories were born of tales such people told one another.

The greatest strength of her early work was the underlying presence of the California desert landscape and its influence on the people who inhabited it. As she explained in "The Lost Mine of Fisherman's Peak," "every story of that country is colored by the fashion of the life there; breaking up in swift, passionate intervals between long, dun stretches, like the land that out of hot sinks of desolation heaves up great bulks of granite ranges."<sup>31</sup> In such writing, she said, "time is the essence of the undertaking, time to live into the land and absorb it."<sup>32</sup>





An historical landmark, Mary Austin's home in Independence in the Owens Valley is now a private residence. *Courtesy Lillian H. Jones.*

Over the years Austin's writing matured. She overcame her reliance on the western stereotypes, local color, and sentimentality that had characterized her early stories, and she developed greater fidelity to western literary realism and to her own unique voice. As she explained concerning her stories, "they are in reality, each one of them, openings of a window through which you are to see the desert as I see it. You are to suppose that I have sat down before the fire with you and. . . [have begun] to talk about the desert."<sup>33</sup>

Her writing also moved beyond its early focus on Indian tales and mining and sheepherding lore. This shift came when her marriage began to disintegrate around 1905. With the gradual breakup of her marriage, she started to focus more intensely on the hardships of women's lives in the West. She began to produce material such as "The Bitterness of Women" (1909), a story that explores the fate of a homely Hispanic woman, and "The Ploughed Lands," the tale of a young Indian woman rejected by her white lover. Austin probed the casual,

temporary nature of human relationships on the harsh California frontier. According to one literary critic, "The theme of familial relations gone awry pervades Austin's writing; in the treacherous desert country men are lost, children die, [and] women who wish to become wives and mothers live wasted lives."<sup>34</sup>

Austin's increasing fidelity to literary realism was noted in 1908 by Henry Mills Alden, the editor of *Harper's*. Alden, regarded by some as the greatest editor of his time, observed that modern literature, or the "new art" as he called it, focused on individual "psychical motive" rather than the "externality of life." Its oath was "truth in the interpretation of life"—"the whole truth and nothing but the truth."<sup>35</sup> In his monthly column, "The Editor's Study," Alden named Mary Austin, William Dean Howells, Henry James, and Edith Wharton among those American authors who had embraced the "new realism" in their writing and "departed from the traditions of the Victorian era." Furthermore, he observed, it was "in the short stories of the last ten years that this departure [was] most evident."<sup>36</sup>

Alden accepted eight of Mary Austin's stories for publication in *Harper's* and *Harper's Weekly*. *Harper's*, a high priced, cosmopolitan literary periodical, printed the best of American short fiction, including the work of Willa Cather and James Branch Cabell. Two of Mary Austin's stories of the California desert—"The Fakir" and "The Readjustment"—were published in *Harper's*; the remaining six appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. The *Weekly*, which called itself a family newspaper, was something between a magazine and a newspaper. As one historian has observed, "Pictorially and textually, it was nearly always interesting and often brilliant."<sup>37</sup>

Mary Austin sold two other tales to the *Century*, another expensive literary magazine. With a strong international flavor, it featured color reproductions of Timothy Cole's wood engravings of the French Masters. "The Return of Mr. Wills," one of Mary Austin's best stories of the California desert, made its debut in the June 1907 issue of the *Century*. All twelve of her desert stories that were later published as *Lost Borders* in 1909 first appeared in America's leading literary magazines.

Over the years many editors praised Mary Austin's talents as a western writer. In 1901 Charles Lummis saluted her efforts in the *Land of Sunshine*: "Her work in verse and short story has a quality of its own which has been promptly recognized."<sup>38</sup> Charles Amadon Moody, associate editor of the *Land of Sunshine*, told her "I do not know of any woman in America who has the variety of literary power which you possess."<sup>39</sup> Bliss Perry of the *Atlantic*

*Monthly* praised her writing as "full of charm" because of the "freshness" of her California desert setting.<sup>40</sup> She was, he announced, a "fresh voice from the west."<sup>41</sup> Henry Mills Alden of *Harper's* argued that "the advance in the complete transformation [of the short story] since Bret Harte" had been "emphatically illustrated" in her work.<sup>42</sup> And William H. Briggs, also of *Harper's*, proclaimed his "special fondness" for her California short fiction and declared, "I am ready to wager right now that 'A Walking Woman' is about the high-water mark of American short-story writing."<sup>43</sup>

In her own time Mary Austin's largest audience was what Bliss Perry characterized as "the great magazine reading public." Her short stories reached hundreds of thousands of readers. *Munsey's* alone had a circulation of over eight hundred thousand, the *Youth's Companion* over half a million, *Harper's* and the *Century* several hundred thousand each. These literary magazines offered Mary Austin a thousand times more exposure than did her books, which were published in relatively small numbers. (Her biggest seller, *Isidro*, published in 1905, sold only 11,770 copies.) Moreover, her stories reached an international audience through periodicals such as *Harper's* and *Munsey's*, with their European circulation.

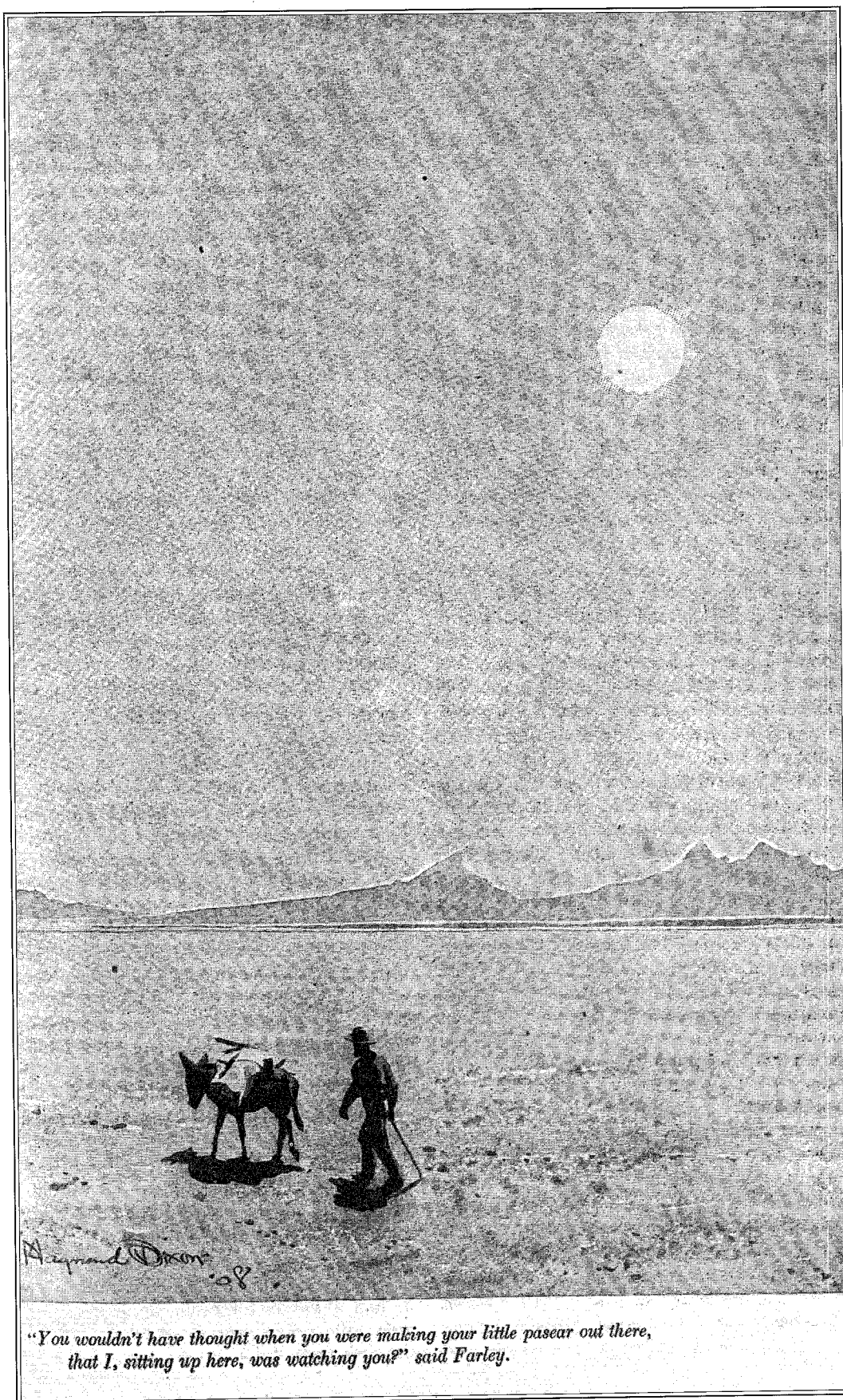
In the 1890s Mary Austin's short pieces earned a fraction of the amount she would receive in the next decade. The *Overland Monthly's* standard payment was ten to fifteen dollars for poems, and twenty-five to thirty dollars for short stories. As the editor explained, his California periodical could not afford to pay contributors as much as the eastern magazines. However, in 1901 Mary Austin was able to furnish the library of her new home in Independence with the proceeds of the year's work, the largest share coming from her poems in *St. Nicholas*. The *Atlantic Monthly*, which paid its contributors less than other high quality eastern magazines, gave Mary Austin thirty-five dollars for her short story, "The Shepherd of the Sierras." It subsequently paid its usual price of eight dollars a page for her story sketches from *The Land of Little Rain*.

By 1908 Mary Austin was selling short stories to *Harper's* magazine for two hundred dollars apiece, the average price for a short story at the time. From the *Century* she received three hundred dollars. (A few writers, such as Jack London, could demand up to one thousand dollars for a single story of five thousand words.) After her first European tour and her relocation to New York City in 1910, Mary Austin's freelance magazine writing continued to be an important source of income.



Maynard Dixon's  
line drawing  
illustrated  
Austin's short  
story "The Blue  
Moon," published  
in *Sunset* in six  
installments,  
beginning in  
January 1909.

*Courtesy  
Huntington Library.*





Like many writers, she could not live on the royalties from her books. As William Dean Howells observed concerning the relationship of the American magazines to the professional writer, they were "both bread and fame to him."<sup>44</sup>

By 1910 Mary Austin had been writing western material for eighteen years. Her published work included numerous poems, sketches, and more than thirty short stories. The serial of her novelette, "The Truscott Luck," had been published in *Out West*; and a second novelette "The Blue Moon," had been serialized in *Sunset*. Her most important books on California, including *The Land of Little Rain* (1903), *The Basket Woman* (1904), *Isidro* (1905), *The Flock* (1906), *Lost Borders* (1909), and later *The Children Sing in the Far West* (1928), were excerpted or printed in their entirety in American literary

periodicals. First read in magazines, her western regional material had entertained and educated readers of all ages. Hers was an invaluable contribution to the literary and cultural history of the West.<sup>45</sup>

CHS

*See notes beginning on page 80.*

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# Sequoia Seminar:

## The Sources of Religious Sectarianism

*by Steven M. Gelber*

New religions, especially those that grow from the mystical insight of a single individual, often seem to spring into existence fully formed.\* The prophet has a revelation and then directs followers in the appropriate way to carry out the new order. But in fact, life is seldom so tidy. Charismatic leaders do not exist in a vacuum, and it is the social context that determines whether a religious visionary is perceived as a worthy messenger or as merely misguided.

The history of Sequoia Seminar, a gospel study group that evolved into a new religion called Creative Initiative, illustrates how it can take decades before the ground is prepared to receive the prophetic vision, indeed how that vision actually serves to ratify changes that have taken place incrementally. Although Stanford University professor Harry Rathbun and his wife Emilia, leaders of Sequoia Seminar, envisioned a sect-like community as early as 1945, it took almost twenty years before psychological, institutional, and economic forces converged to give them the opportunity to convert their study group into a separate religion. In fact, the movement actually experienced two dramatic structural changes in its forty-year history. The first came in 1962, when, on the strength of a religious revelation, it became a new religion, ultimately called Creative Initiative. The second came

twenty years later, when Creative Initiative effectively dissolved in favor of a secular peace movement named Beyond War. Thus, the current Beyond War movement, with branches in two dozen states, has historical and philosophical roots that go back more than fifty years. This article explores the origins of the first of these two profound changes.

Far from craving power or notoriety, the Rathbuns tried for years to operate within the framework of the mainline churches. Ultimately, however, the organization they created evolved from a lay group cooperating with the churches into the functional equivalent of a sect that vied with the churches for the loyalty of their mutual members. This untenable position of being both a partner and a competitor of the churches demanded resolution. Unwilling to remain trapped in an unproductive relationship with the churches, yet unable to acknowledge their de facto status as a rival, they needed to take a definite step to cut themselves free. It was at that point that Emilia experienced the mystical call that allowed the group to acknowledge its independent status as the "New Religion of the Third Age."

Thus Sequoia Seminar is an historical case study in sect formation. Scholars tend to divide religious organizations into "churches" and "sects." Churches are usually defined as large, socially sanctioned organizations whose values closely parallel those of the dominant culture. Membership in a church requires little individual effort; in fact, people are effectively born into churches and simply

\*This article is adapted from Steven M. Gelber and Martin L. Cook, *Saving the Earth: The History of a Middle Class Millenarian Movement* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1990).





Henry Burton Sharman, founder of the movement that resulted in the establishment of Sequoia Seminar and Creative Initiative. Sharman is shown at his Canadian retreat center, Camp Minnesing, in 1921, wearing his characteristic tweed suit, high shoes, and stern expression. *Courtesy Creative Initiative Foundation.*



accept them as part of life. Sects, on the other hand, are seen as marginal. They are usually small in size, hold ideas that are sometimes at odds with mainstream beliefs, and require that their members make adult decisions to adhere to their often exacting codes. Peoples' decisions to join, or in this case, to form a sect can be seen as an economic decision. In this sense "economic" does not simply refer to monetary exchange, but is used in a broader meaning to refer to all limited resources, which could include, in addition to time and money, psychic and physical effort, social reputation, and the like. Because mainline churches have values and behavior expectations compatible with society at large, there is relatively little personal cost in being a member. On the other hand, because sects depart dramatically from general social values, joining one can be very "expensive." Sects, therefore, must provide their members with benefits they might otherwise get from non-religious sources.<sup>1</sup> As Sequoia Seminar evolved from a church affiliated study group to an independent sect, it followed precisely the path predicted by this "economic" model: making more demands on its members, while at the same time providing them with more services.

#### THE FOUNDER

The movement's origins lay in eastern Canada, far from the San Francisco Bay Area where it eventually flourished. In 1884 a somewhat skeptical young Canadian farmer named Henry Burton Sharman attended a religious revival with the intention of challenging the evangelist. Sharman had grown skeptical about his faith when he had been unable to reconcile it with the scientific values taught at Ontario Agricultural College, where he studied for two years. But it was the evangelist who challenged Sharman when he told his audience that "every statement of Jesus could be proved as surely as the experiments the students were carrying on in their laboratories."<sup>2</sup> According to his friends, Sharman left the meeting profoundly moved, and before the night was over he had dedicated his life to the will of God.

After a brief but very successful business career, Sharman went on to earn a doctorate in New Testament studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He then embarked on a lifetime of leading faculty and students in independent study of the synoptic gospels (i.e., the Gospels of Matthew,

Mark, and Luke that present the teachings of Jesus from a similar perspective). The study groups, called "Jesus as Teacher" seminars, were frequently sponsored by the YMCA and the Student Christian Movement of Canada, which he helped found. The seminars were conducted at colleges by both Sharman and by disciples who used his techniques. But those who wanted the most intensive exposure to his methods spent a month of their summer vacation at Camp Minnesing, a remote Canadian retreat center run by Sharman.<sup>3</sup> Throughout his active career Sharman focused his energy on eastern Canada, and it was only by chance that a few students from the west found their way into his circle.

Sharman was strongly influenced by "higher criticism," a movement to study Christianity scientifically that was making inroads at the University of Chicago when Sharman was there at the turn of the century. For him, Jesus was a human figure whose importance derived from the profundity of his ideas, not his divinity. Jesus as Teacher seminars focused on the synoptic gospels as the most historically accurate accounts of Jesus' thoughts, and used books written by Sharman to guide their search for the true message of Jesus. Sharman insisted that his students purge their minds of all preconceptions about the "Records" (the term he used to refer to the gospels) and that they reach their own conclusions and find their own personal truths.<sup>4</sup>

The seminars were Sharman's "calling." Acting within the North American evangelical tradition, Sharman became a free-lance missionary for his own method of religious inquiry, which he believed would make intellectuals into better Christians within their own churches. From 1915 until he retired in 1945, he led his Bible study groups, financing most of the effort from his own pocket and deliberately avoiding any permanent organization that might continue his mission. He once told Harry Rathbun, "All you need to do to kill anything is organize it. Then it will roll on long after it is dead."<sup>5</sup> Although Sharman refused to formalize his efforts, some of his students were eager to preserve the tradition, so in the summer of 1944 a group of veteran "Minnesingers" who called themselves the "Central Group" drew up tentative plans to create a permanent organization that would carry on Sharman's work.<sup>6</sup>

Sharman had since 1933 lived in semi-retirement in Carmel, California, and it was there that Harry





Emilia and Harry Rathbun at Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, ca. 1948, where they led early Sequoia Seminars. *Courtesy Creative Initiative Foundation.*

and Emilia Rathbun had been drawn into his orbit. Isolated from his eastern followers, and in close proximity to the Rathbuns who lived in Palo Alto, Sharman and they had become very close by 1944. Working from this unique position, Harry Rathbun sent a telegram to the Central Group informing them that Sharman would neither lead the 1945 summer seminar nor give the organizing group his mailing list. The Rathbuns, it appeared, had come up with a new idea and were trying to head off Sharman's support for the Central Group's plan to form a permanent organization. Harry told them that Sharman was giving his "wholehearted cooperation" to a "more courageous and revolutionary program . . . based upon and requiring the total commitment central in the religion of Jesus." Rathbun asked the Central Group to give him and Emilia authorization to continue planning with Sharman for a "program of acting large and imaginative enough to meet the demands of the crisis of our time."<sup>7</sup> The atomic bomb had yet to be dropped, so the "crisis" referred to here was not the possibility of a nuclear holocaust—that would emerge as a concern later—but rather a generalized apocalyptic vision of a world consuming itself through greed, fear, and enmity.

The project the Rathbuns had in mind was ambitious beyond anything previously attempted by Sharman or his followers, presaging both the style and content of the Creative Initiative movement. The Rathbuns wished to limit what had always been an open admission policy and make commitment a precondition of membership.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, they made it clear that they were not interested in merely helping individuals achieve higher personal understanding. They also believed they had an opportunity for a "large-scale program of 'selling' to the world the religion which can save it."<sup>9</sup> Here, then, for the first time, was a clear expression of the sectarian messianic impulse in the Rathbuns' work. They perceived the world in danger and saw themselves as saviors. Teaching people how to learn the message of Jesus from the gospels was all very well, but it had to be placed in a larger context. Personal conversion through Records study was not an end in itself, but a first step toward becoming part of a new community of like-minded people, who would fan out across the world to lead humankind back from the brink of self-destruction by spreading Sharman's method.

In language that would become typical of the Rathbun's uncompromising demand for complete

dedication to the cause, Harry wrote to another member of the central leadership, "Perhaps such a renewed and revitalized commitment to the will of God may mean for most of us who are members of the Central Group the giving up of our present jobs for a year—maybe permanently—and making *this* our sole job,—for the year and perhaps the rest of our lives." Harry said that he was willing to ask for a leave of absence for the following year, and he challenged the rest of the group to do likewise. "Are we serious about it?" he asked in the same letter. "Are we really willing to sell all? Do we truly believe we have the answer to a desperately sick world's troubles?" The questions were obviously rhetorical. The answer was, "If we do, must we not face these implications and lay plans on a vastly greater scale than those we were thinking of as our first steps?"<sup>10</sup>

Harry and Emilia Rathbun's religious philosophy had a variety of sources that were absent from the backgrounds of most other Sharman followers, the combination of which was probably the source of their apocalyptic outlook. In the mid-1930s both Rathbuns had studied in America with the German psychologist Fritz Kunkel. It was Kunkel who introduced them to the Jungian ideas that truly mature individuals accepted religion and blended within themselves both male and female attributes.<sup>11</sup> At about the same time, in 1935 Emilia became involved with Frank Buchman's Oxford Group. This lay religious movement emphasized personal conversion through the confession of sins and stressed the ability of the individual to receive direct communication from God.<sup>12</sup> Both Kunkel and Buchman focused on the importance of the individual, and studying their work apparently gave Emilia an increased sense of personal mission. The ideas of Gerald Heard gave this sense of mission specific direction. Heard was a British philosopher and parapsychologist who opened a school outside Los Angeles where Emilia studied in 1942. Heard believed that humankind could evolve to a new level of consciousness through a process of prayer modeled on eastern mysticism and meditation.<sup>13</sup> Harry and Emilia absorbed the ideas of Kunkel, Buchman, Heard, and Sharman at approximately the same time and synthesized them into a unique religious vision that led them to believe that they could use the Sharman method to transform people into the seeds of a new human species that would bring about a "third age" of peace and cooperation.

In addition to the Rathbuns and a few others who seem to have shared their hopes for a worldwide religious revival, there were two other factions in the Central Group. The most conservative, who had close ties to the mainline churches, felt that Sharman's work should be aimed solely at the individual, taking no position at all on broader social issues. The other was led by two political radicals, Earl Willmott and Dryden Phelps. Like the Rathbuns, they wanted to bring about the Kingdom of God, but they felt it could best be done through political action taken by religiously motivated people. Heirs of the social gospel movement, which sought to combine religious commitment and progressive social reform, Willmott and Phelps had both been missionaries to China and were strong supporters of the communist revolution there, although both denied any connection to communists in North America. The Rathbuns' method was a synthesis of the other two positions. Like the conservatives, the Rathbuns wanted to concentrate their effort on converting individuals, but like the radicals they hoped that their action would also lead to major changes in society. Unlike Willmott and Phelps, however, they had no sympathy whatsoever for communism. Thus, the stage was set for a confrontation at Camp Minnesing in the summer of 1945. Contrary to Harry's telegram, Sharman did try to lead a Records seminar, but, perhaps symbolically, this, his last seminar, was never completed.

Rather than launching a new organization to promote Records seminars as originally planned, the 1945 summer retreat at Minnesing turned into a showdown among groups with very different visions of the future of Sharman's work. The conservatives who stressed individual conversion worried that the Rathbuns' emphasis on group structure could cause their movement to become a cult. They did not want an organization requiring formal membership that might compete with established churches, and they believed that the group's only purpose should be to promote the study of Jesus. The radicals agreed with the conservatives that membership "should be open to all who affirmed their intention to participate in the work of the F[oundation] for its specific purpose." The Rathbuns and their allies, on the other hand, "felt there should be definite restriction—preferably to those who affirmed their commitment to God."<sup>14</sup> Hostility reigned, and finally, after six weeks of bickering, Sharman stepped in to put an end to the



debate. He called off the Records seminar that he had been leading during the hours when people were not engaged in the political battle, and he roundly chastised everybody for the unseemly wrangling.<sup>15</sup>

Because the group was unable, or unwilling, to resolve the underlying conflict between the community-oriented position of the Rathbuns and the social action position of Phelps and Willmott, the confrontation at the summer meeting finally played itself out on the incidental question of organization. Although Willmott, for reasons that are not clear, appears to have had the support of a majority of the younger people, opposition from the Rathbuns and other senior people forced him to tender his resignation both as secretary and as a member of the Central Group. The secretary job then went to Harry Rathbun.

Sharman himself had remained aloof from the battle, although he was clearly disillusioned by the political radicalism of Dryden Phelps, whom, up to that point, Sharman had viewed as his probable successor.<sup>16</sup> Because Sharman was disenchanted with the Canadian radicals and lived near the Rathbuns' Palo Alto home, Minnesing '45 served to strengthen the close ties that were growing between Sharman and his California disciples. The connection with Sharman and Harry's new prominence in the group assured that the line of succession would pass to him (and Emilia) and not to the social activists.<sup>17</sup>

#### HARRY AND EMILIA

Over a period of sixteen years, from 1946 when they inherited the Sharman tradition to 1962 when Emilia had her vision, the Rathbuns slowly changed the movement from a Bible study group in the Sharman tradition to a de facto religious sect. At first, they limited their activity to students, mostly from Stanford University where Harry taught. They made no real effort to coordinate their program with other Sharman-inspired study groups in Canada or the eastern United States. As those other groups faded, and the Rathbuns' movement grew, the San Francisco Bay Area became the new center of Sharman-style gospel study. However, as they had made clear during the Minnesing '45 dispute, the Rathbuns had a grander agenda than did Sharman or any of his other followers. They wanted to transform the world, but could not do so if they limited their efforts to Stanford students. Thus, their own

messianic impulse drove them to enlarge their membership to include educated, successful men and women who were no longer connected with the academic community.

The move away from a purely student study group took place because Harry and Emilia Rathbun wished to create a permanent organization that could serve as the catalyst for a widespread change in human attitudes away from conflict and toward peaceful cooperation. Sharman's work was a poor model for such a structured, permanent, adult-oriented organization. Assiduously non-sectarian, Sharman had rejected any kind of institutionalization for his activity. The Rathbuns, however, had a different vision. Rather than a stage through which people passed, they saw their movement as a permanent affiliation. To keep people as members, they had to find a new source of participants other than students, all of whom moved on after they graduated. Adults with roots in the community, however, could be counted on for more than a few years, but only if they could be kept involved. New courses in psychology and spirituality were developed to provide adult members with a continuing variety of educational experiences appropriate to their stage in life. The new courses were closely linked to an increasing emphasis on psychological counseling that gave participants emotional support and practical assistance, including child care to ease their participation in group activities.

Partially by design and partially by force of circumstances, the Rathbuns developed a structured social environment for group members. Their approach, like Sharman's, was still individually oriented, but a permanent religious community emerged to support the individual religious experiences. The movement began to develop an ideology that varied significantly from mainstream social and religious thought. It sought the primary loyalty of its members, weakening their ties to their churches; it developed its own organizational structure with a leadership composed of people who were perceived as spiritually advanced; and, most important, it began to provide participants with programs that compensated for the social and psychological cost incurred when they joined a group that made increasing demands on their time and loyalty. Although they were not yet theologically heterodox, the Rathbuns' group would take on the form of a sect, and only then would it finally develop a unique ideology.

Neither Harry nor Emilia evidenced any propensity for religious leadership prior to their involvement with Sharman. Harry was born in 1894 in the town of Mitchell, Dakota Territory, where his father owned a grocery store.<sup>18</sup> While neither of his parents was a regular church goer, they sent him to Methodist Sunday school and reared him with what Harry called "a strict Protestant ethic." Harry never questioned the basic validity of the values taught by the Methodist Church. Even after he left the church, for example, he continued to adhere to the non-drinking pledge he had signed as a youth.<sup>19</sup>

After Harry graduated from high school, his family moved first to Los Angeles and then to San Jose, where he lived while earning a degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford University. He worked as an administrator in industry until 1926, when he decided to return to Stanford for his law degree.<sup>20</sup> Before he could launch his legal career, however, Harry was offered a position on the Stanford faculty, where he spent his entire professional career as a popular and beloved teacher.<sup>21</sup>

Between the time he left the church as a young man and the time he married Emilia, Harry was neither socially nor religiously active. His energies were completely devoted to his business career, his study of law, and finally to preparing and teaching classes. But all of that would change when he met Emilia Lindeman, who would become the major influence in his life. It was she who encouraged Harry to become involved in religion again, and there, as in his classroom teaching, he found success and satisfaction. Near the end of his life Harry wrote, "Thank God for Emilia who has been my teacher, but whom I have resisted, who has taken the brunt of my hostility, but has persisted in the job of helping me save my soul!"<sup>22</sup>

Emilia Lindeman was born in the Mexican city of Colima in 1906. Her father had been born and raised in North Carolina and had gone to Mexico as a young civil engineer to work on the construction of Mexican ports and railroads. Emilia's maternal grandfather was a low-level German diplomat whose family connections had enabled him to go to Mexico, rather than to prison when he refused to join the army. He married a Mexican woman of mixed Indian and Spanish background, purchased large tracts of land, and ran a series of haciendas where he raised cattle, sugar cane, and coffee. The family had no single home, but moved from hacienda to hacienda as Emilia's

grandfather supervised the family's holdings and her father traveled to the locations of his engineering projects.<sup>23</sup> Neither her grandfather, who had converted to Catholicism in order to marry her grandmother, nor her parents were religious. Although they supported churches and priests for the workers and attended services on holidays, the family viewed the Catholic Church of Mexico as practically pagan, and inappropriate for people of high rank.

In 1922, when Emilia was 16, her father decided she was being "raised like a savage" and sent her to the United States for an American education. She attended high school in San Jose, while living with relatives of her father, and then went on to San Jose State College with the intention of becoming a teacher.<sup>24</sup> When she entered college, Emilia was even less involved in organized religious activities than Harry had been. However, she was very active socially, joining the San Jose State YWCA, an important center of women's activities. So removed was the YWCA from the ordinary religious concerns of Christian life that when the group's leader came back from a Sharman seminar and began talking about Jesus, the other women were mildly shocked. But Emilia was intrigued. She made it her business to meet Sharman at the annual YMCA-YWCA conferences that were held each year at the Asilomar conference center in Pacific Grove, near Sharman's retirement home in Carmel. Later, Emilia admitted that while she was impressed with Sharman as an individual, his rigorous intellectual approach to the gospels did not excite her. Nevertheless, she was increasingly attracted to a more serious study of religion that blossomed into a full commitment when she finally attended her first Jesus as Teacher summer seminar in 1934, by which time she had already married Harry and had her first child.<sup>25</sup>

#### BECOMING SHARMAN DISCIPLES

The Jesus as Teacher seminar that Emilia attended in 1934 was run by two women, Frances Warnecke and Elizabeth Boyden, who had been active in Records study since 1929. The young women had become involved with Sharman through the YWCA while they were undergraduates at the University of California, Berkeley. After graduation they spent several years promoting Sharman gospel study at Bay Area colleges, including Stanford, and there they inevitably met Emilia Rathbun, who had also moved into



the Sharman circle.<sup>26</sup> Warnecke, Boyden, and the Rathbuns were soon working together on the Stanford campus, recruiting students and faculty for the summer seminars at Minnesing, even though neither of the Rathbuns had ever attended one. Thus, when Emilia attended the Warnecke-Boyden seminar in the summer of 1934, she had already been active in Records work for a number of years.

Perhaps because she had achieved the goals of her early life—a husband, a child, and social position—and found that she needed something more, the Records seminar proved to be a major turning point in her religious life. Upon returning home from the seminar, she resigned from the various clubs in which she was active, went to the local Baptist church, and asked the pastor if he would let her lead a gospel study group among the church women. He agreed, and Emilia launched a career of work among the churches that would last for more than a quarter of a century. Lacking the academic credentials of Sharman and Harry, Emilia saw other wives and mothers as her natural constituency, and she appears to have been the first Sharman disciple to move beyond the academy in her work. Emilia worked at a series of churches in the Palo Alto area, frequently asking the pastors for names of women who sent their children to Sunday school, but did not themselves attend church. She took these “dumpers” (because they “dumped” their kids on Sunday) into a study group, and, according to Emilia, turned many of them into the most active people in their churches.<sup>27</sup>

While Emilia was conducting Sharman-style gospel study groups with church women, Harry was also becoming increasingly involved in Sharman's work. The press of university business prevented him from attending any of the longer seminars, including the one Emilia went to in the summer of 1934. He could only take time to drive her up to the site and stay for the first day. Just the first session was an eye opener for Harry. For the first time since he had left the Methodist church as an undergraduate, he perceived the possibility of reconciling his beliefs with the teachings of Jesus. He was able to return for the last nine days of the four week seminar and found the experience as important to him as it was to Emilia. Unlike his wife, Harry did not feel compelled to change his life style, but he did discover that those supernatural aspects of religious faith that had made him uncomfortable were subject to rational explanation and

that Jesus, regarded as a teacher, could point the way to finding God.<sup>28</sup>

As a result of his experience at the California summer seminar, Harry felt moved to begin leading Records study groups through the Stanford Methodist student organization. In the following year, 1935, he and Emilia attended their first summer seminar with Sharman at Camp Minnesing. For approximately the next ten years the Rathbuns participated actively in a religious life that centered on teaching Records study in the Palo Alto area, recruiting participants for the summer seminars in Canada, and participating in the work of the California seminar, which continued to be run by Elizabeth Boyden until 1939. There were no summer seminars in California between 1939, when Boyden had a falling out with Henry Sharman, and 1945, when the Minnesing seminars ended in acrimony. Then, in 1946, the Rathbuns moved to fill the seminar vacuum partially by establishing their own summer program in California. Dubbed “Sequoia Seminar,” the new summer Records program did not really replace Minnesing as a fountainhead of Sharman-style Records study but did become the largest and most active of the twenty-five or so separate Records study groups that existed after the 1945 breakup.<sup>29</sup>

The first Sequoia Seminar was held in July of 1946 in a rented fishing lodge on the Klamath River on the northern California coast. This isolated site proved inconvenient, and for the next four years the summer seminar moved to the conference center at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, closer to the Bay Area and to Henry Sharman, who occasionally attended sessions.<sup>30</sup> The Rathbuns' dream, however, was to have a place of their own, their own West Coast version of Camp Minnesing.

In October 1945, just after the Minnesing breakup, Harry and Emilia met with a group of men in their Palo Alto home and outlined a plan to establish a permanent center for Sharman's work. Unlike the restricted academic focus that Sharman preferred, Harry wanted to recruit widely among other professionals, such as doctors, psychiatrists, clergy, teachers, and managers. The purpose of Harry's proposed center would be to teach “the way” to financially and educationally privileged people. Since the teaching process would involve meetings, conferences, and summer seminars, Harry wanted a center situated on a large secluded site with good views and basic improvements. Thus far, he was merely envisioning a Minnesing-like

retreat. But he went on to speculate that the center might grow into a partially self-supporting community, raising its own food and running its own handicraft shops. Workers could go out from this center to serve and teach in the world, and return to it for support and rejuvenation.<sup>31</sup> It was, in fact, the same plan that had caused so much confusion among Sharman's followers the previous year. The Rathbuns were serious enough about this idea to approach philanthropist Henry Kaiser for donations to get the project started.<sup>32</sup>

Funds were not forthcoming, however, and after a few years the Rathbuns had given up their dream of a permanent home for the Sequoia Seminar. Writing to Sharman in 1948, Emilia admitted, "We are through with the experiment of buying property. God doesn't want it as all attempts have failed. I see now that it would greatly handicap our freedom in teaching the *pure* truth because we might fall into all sorts of errors stemming from the need

for finances to keep property up." In an afterthought, Emilia expressed her wonder at the way God works. "In time," she said, "He shows us the error of our ways and if we are sensitive to read his signs and not too proud to admit our mistakes."<sup>33</sup> In the same letter, ironically, she reported the death of Irving Hellman, one of the most active students in the Records study. Although Emilia did not know it at the time, Hellman had made Sequoia Seminar the beneficiary of his ten-thousand-dollar life insurance policy. Emilia subsequently interpreted the Hellman inheritance as divine beneficence, contradicting her earlier conclusion that God wanted exactly the opposite.<sup>34</sup>

When the Rathbuns, who had been members of the Palo Alto Friends Meeting for a few years, heard in 1950 that the American Friends Service Committee had been given fifty acres of land in Ben Lomond in the Santa Cruz mountains, Harry proposed that Sequoia Seminar develop the land



Raising the rafters of Las Alas Lodge, one of several permanent buildings constructed by Sequoia Seminar members at Ben Lomond, early 1960s. Volunteers celebrate their accomplishment with cookies and punch. *Courtesy Creative Initiative Foundation.*



jointly with the Quakers. In exchange for the money from the Hellman legacy, the Friends gave Sequoia Seminar the right to use certain portions of the Ben Lomond land. The funds were used to buy materials for three buildings that were erected with volunteer labor and used jointly by both groups. Subsequently Sequoia Seminar purchased additional land and constructed buildings of its own, also with volunteer labor.<sup>35</sup>

Because it was so far from Palo Alto where most of the members lived, Ben Lomond never served as the projected base camp for a community of believers, but it did play an important role in moving the group toward the logical conclusion of their religious philosophy, the formation of an independent sect. During this time they experimented with both the form and content of their movement. The process of transformation from lay Bible study group to religious sect was both the cause and the effect of tension with the established churches through whom they worked.

#### FUNCTIONING AS A PROTO-SECT

**B**ecause Sharman's Records study groups had been distinct from, but completely consonant with, the mainline churches, there was very little cost to the people who participated in them. When Harry and Emilia assumed leadership of the program in 1946, they initially continued the original pattern. Over the next fifteen years, however, Sequoia Seminar underwent a series of changes demanding greater and greater commitment from its members. In turn, it had to provide them with increased measures of support. By the end of the decade the group had moved so far from its original social context within the mainline churches that it had become a competitor with them for the limited social, economic, and psychological resources of its members. It had become what could be called a "proto-sect."

The first fifteen years of Sequoia Seminar saw a drift away from the norms of the churches and even further away from the norms of secular society. Accompanying this movement were internal changes that made the group more sect-like. First, as Sequoia Seminar became more highly structured, both organizationally and ideologically, it became increasingly intolerant of those who were less-than-fully committed. Second, unlike churches whose beliefs are relatively flexible in response to changing social values, the philosophical foundations established by the Rathbuns in the late 1930s

remained essentially intact and became even more fixed, increasing the tension between members and society. Third, Sequoia Seminar provided increasing services for its members to compensate them for the growing costs of belonging, and, at the same time, made increasing demands on them. Finally, the group's initial appeal was to women, a socially marginal group who had fewer leadership opportunities than men in society at large and who therefore experienced less cost in joining the movement.

Following the tradition established by Sharman, the Rathbuns preferred not to think of Sequoia Seminar as an independent organization during its formative years. They sought to work with mainline churches and were careful to assure potential participants that they posed no threat to established religious groups. The first announcement for the Sequoia Seminar in 1946 stated that "those who are sponsoring this seminar are not connected with any institution or organization in common."<sup>36</sup> As late as 1959 and 1960 the group's annual report still insisted that Sequoia Seminar was making "a conscious effort to avoid institutionalization and development of systematic ideology." The very fact that Sequoia Seminar was issuing an annual report belied the claim that it was not an organization, a paradox admitted by the report itself when it pointed out that they owned property, held meetings, conducted seminars, and, they might have added, had a budget of almost twenty thousand dollars a year. Nevertheless, the report noted that the group had "no officers, no elections, no voting on decisions; we, as a group, have no denominational preference; we advocate no creeds or dogmas, nor do we purport to have 'the' answer to man's religious problems."<sup>37</sup>

Sequoia Seminar simultaneously wanted to transcend the churches and work within them. It wanted to be a distinct entity with its own membership while not competing with traditional churches. There were few models for such groups. Sharman had done it; so had the YMCA, the YWCA, and laymen's movements like Frank Buchman's Oxford Group. Nevertheless, the great potential for conflict between the churches and Sequoia Seminar grew as the latter organization slowly evolved a bureaucratic structure. To the extent that potential members had finite amounts of time and money that they were willing to invest in their religious life, what they gave to one group they would have to take from the other. As long as Sequoia Seminar

was running its study groups within the churches, and as long as its operating budget remained modest, the conflict was minimal. Between 1946, when it held its first summer seminar, and around 1955, Sequoia Seminar and the churches appear to have had the kind of symbiotic relationship envisioned by Sharman.

After 1955, however, Sequoia Seminar entered a phase of organizational development that led to its becoming a proto-sect. Members were expressing more individual identification with the organization, while the religious life of the group was becoming more highly structured through the creation of a nascent bureaucracy. Increasingly the study groups and courses demanded more time and effort from participants, and Sequoia Seminar had to grapple with issues of recruiting participants and new leaders. There were a number of reasons for these changes. First, Sharman had died in 1953 at the age of eighty-eight, removing his restraining influence. Second, Harry was nearing the end of his career at Stanford and probably envisioned being able to spend more time on the group. Third, and most important, Sequoia Seminar had completed the first buildings on the Ben Lomond property, giving it the sense of permanence and institutional identity that it had previously lacked. The organization had put down roots in its own real estate and was looking for a direction in which to grow.

Some of these new themes were expressed at a conference of leaders in 1955. They rejected Sharman's willingness to leave the leadership of study groups in the hands of relatively untrained people and concluded that "the leader must be 'on the spot' and actually lead." Even more significantly, the leadership seminar took the unprecedented step of downgrading the scholarly method advocated by Sharman. "Sharman's approach was somewhat intellectual and aloof," they noted. They went on to stress the strong collective orientation that so clearly differentiated Sequoia Seminar from Camp Minnesing: "We feel it is necessary to live the life in the group—to practice love in the group situation."<sup>38</sup> This emphasis on community indicates how far the group had drifted from Sharman's principles. Although Sharman's books and the Jesus as Teacher seminars would remain the intellectual heart and soul of the movement, the group was now self-consciously aware that it had evolved to a new stage of development in which it had to forge an identity of its own. In conformity to the

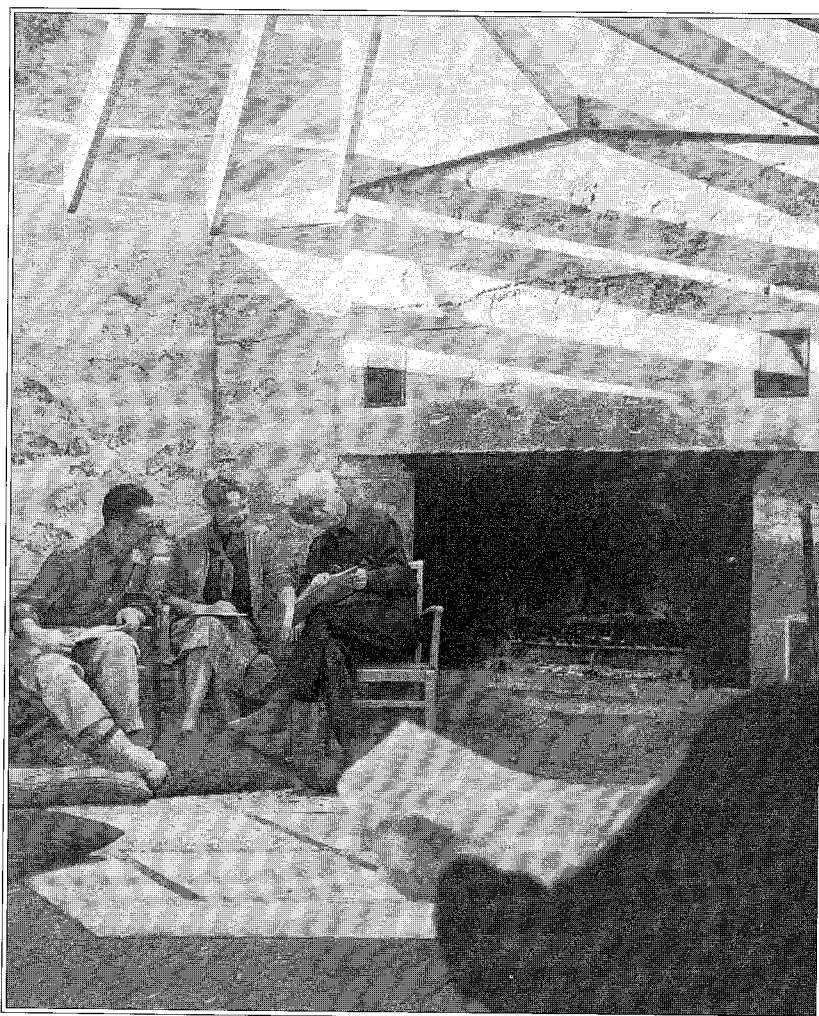
Rathbuns' interest in group solidarity, this new identity would be much more communal in nature than anything that had taken place during the Sharman era. The lure of collective commitment was very strong, and while the movement never withdrew into itself to the point of becoming what is commonly called a "cult," Harry felt comfortable telling movement members that "the age of the rugged individualist is past. Some societies are given over to collectives. We prefer to stress community. Each of us considers himself expendable for others."<sup>39</sup>

#### TOWARD A NEW STRUCTURE

On December 24, 1955, Sequoia Seminar published a formal statement of its new organization and operating principles. This was part of a general on-going restructuring of the group's administration and included the formation of a new legal entity, the Sequoia Seminar Foundation.<sup>40</sup> The new formal organization consisted of a planning committee and four operating committees. Those whose lack of commitment did not yet qualify them for the planning committee could serve on one of the four operating committees: administration, public relations, property, and personnel.<sup>41</sup> Ever cautious of the possibility of conflict between themselves and the churches with whom they worked, planning committee members carefully warned that work on the operating committees should not divert people who were "already productively engaged in creative activities such as church work." For those who were not so engaged, however, the committee meetings themselves were supposed to be one of the ways in which people "would live the life in the group." Indeed, "live the life," a phrase of Emilia's that became standard Creative Initiative terminology, meant to behave in a way dedicated to the will of God and the principles of Jesus as interpreted by the group.<sup>42</sup>

The organizational plan of 1955 continued to serve Sequoia Seminar through the transition phase that culminated in 1962. During this seven-year period the leadership gained experience in running an organization that directed the study activities of hundreds of people throughout the Bay Area. They became skilled in coordinating the efforts of volunteer group leaders, study group participants, and the development of permanent facilities at Ben Lomond. By 1956, when the group





Harry and Emilia Rathbun (right and center) and Sequoia Seminar leader John Levy review materials before a weekend retreat at Ben Lomond in 1953. *Courtesy Creative Initiative Foundation.*

initiated a newsletter, they had taken on an organizational structure that would continue when they finally became a distinct religious sect.<sup>43</sup>

During this period the original Sharman vision of work within the academic community became too constraining for a group that wished to expand but was not yet ready to move beyond the geographical limits of the Bay Area. While Harry continued to recruit actively on the Stanford campus, the proportion of students at the summer seminars fell from seventy-five percent in 1947 to less than ten percent in 1955.<sup>44</sup> Only by actively recruiting participants from the larger community could the Rathbuns attract sufficient numbers of people to run the kind of weekend and summer seminars for which they had bought Ben Lomond. However, once they moved beyond the campus in their search for members, they could no longer take for granted the quality of the participants and they had to begin making conscious efforts to maintain the

highly educated, upper-middle-class image that had marked the group since the Sharman era. Internal recruiting documents emphasized that they were looking for “people with mature minds—leaders, thinkers, doers,” and that recruiters should “concentrate on professional people.”<sup>45</sup>

This switch from students to general population was to have an unforeseen effect; the proportion of men to women fell dramatically. During the first three years of Sequoia Seminar slightly more men than women attended. After 1953 the ratio was almost always sixty percent or more women. The actual proportion of women in discussion groups during the year was probably even higher, since there was a tendency for couples to attend the two-week summer seminars together as part of their vacation, even if the men were not active during the day-time activities throughout the rest of the year.<sup>46</sup> On at least one occasion in 1957, Harry held a special dinner for the “husbands and

friends" of the women discussion group participants with an eye to setting up all-male groups if there was sufficient interest. There is no indication that there was.<sup>47</sup> Concomitantly, as larger numbers of more mature women attended meetings, the need for child care became acute. In 1951 one of the summer seminars made special arrangements for child care so both husbands and wives could attend, and throughout the 1950s many couples participated in ad hoc exchanges of children. The child care program led to establishing a summer camp in 1961.<sup>48</sup> Unlike college students whose personal needs were met by their schools, married people needed supports like child care if they were to participate. By providing such services Sequoia Seminar took further steps toward establishing a sect-like institutionalized support system.

Financially, Sequoia Seminar remained a modest operation. Like much else connected with the seminar before 1955, accounting procedures were rather casual. There are no account books among the Rathbun papers and only simplified financial statements were issued. Scattered references to money indicate that the modest \$35 fee for the seminars covered most expenses. Since there were no employees, and the Rathbuns never took a penny for their time and services, overall costs were minimal. The expense of constructing additional buildings at Ben Lomond with volunteer labor was met through contributions from members and occasional bank loans.<sup>49</sup> The first complete balance sheet appeared in 1955, and indicates that the group actually lost a bit more than \$500 on their seminars that year. Their general operating costs were a modest \$700, and, with an income made up mostly of contributions of about \$10,000, they were actually able to save money against future expenses. Hence by no stretch of the imagination was Sequoia Seminar a big-budget operation. In 1955 its net worth, including the property and buildings at Ben Lomond, was \$43,450.<sup>50</sup> This pattern remained relatively stable through 1962. Seminars paid for themselves, total contributions ranged from \$7,000 to \$11,000 a year, and expenses—principally for continued expansion of the Ben Lomond camp—kept the cash on hand quite low.<sup>51</sup>

Although donations and expenses remained stable throughout the 1950s, participation grew appreciably during most of the decade. No records are available for 1946, the year of the first seminar, but 59 people attended the two seminars held in 1947. In 1953, after the move to Ben Lomond,

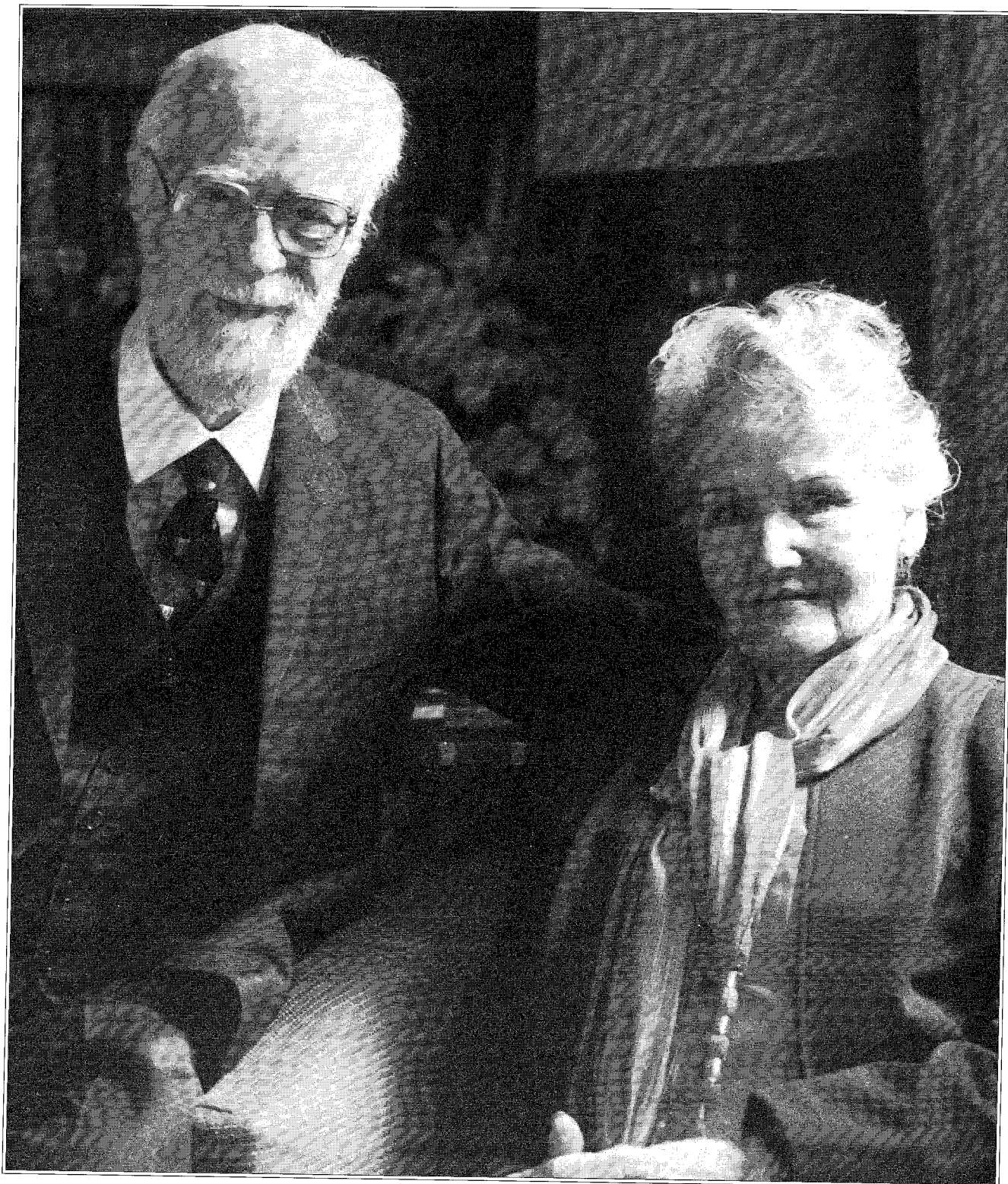
Sequoia Seminar offered 5 seminars and the number of participants jumped to 86. Those figures steadily grew until 1959, when 217 people attended seminars at Ben Lomond, but after that attendance numbers dropped by more than a quarter to around 160 in 1961.<sup>52</sup>

The membership problem caught the group in a dilemma. They wanted to expand, yet at the same time wanted to admit only those people who were serious in their desire to explore the gospels and open themselves to the possibility of living a new life.<sup>53</sup> Seminar leaders also needed to tread cautiously in asking for funds from new members since Sequoia Seminar participants were often still active in mainline churches. If local ministers believed they were losing money to Sequoia Seminar, they could have easily dissuaded many participants. Besides having to worry about the sincerity of members and possible conflict with the churches, Sequoia Seminar was not prepared to move beyond its narrow geographic focus. The Palo Alto organization encouraged Records study groups in other areas, including Los Angeles, Boise, and Chicago, but expected new groups to "become completely independent and self-sufficient, including providing their own leadership."<sup>54</sup> During the peak year of this period, in 1959, about five hundred people in the Bay Area were actively involved in local study groups and/or the summer seminars.<sup>55</sup>

By the end of the decade the strain of ambivalence was showing more clearly. Special meetings focused on ways to attract new people, while at the same time the annual report admitted that "numerical growth does not necessarily indicate that anything of real significance is taking place."<sup>56</sup> Moreover, much of the growth had taken place in so-called "continuation seminars" designed for people who had already attended the basic Jesus as Teacher seminar. Although only 20 more people attended basic seminars in 1959 than in 1955, attendance in continuation seminars had almost quadrupled, from 33 to 121.<sup>57</sup> This was one more sign that Sequoia Seminar was becoming more sect-like in both its form and function. It was evolving into a place of continuing spiritual fellowship where people could find a coherent religious philosophy and ongoing support for transforming their lives.

This institutional dynamic was driving Sequoia Seminar toward a split with the churches. The desire to retain their adult membership and the need to utilize fully the property at Ben Lomond put them in competition with the churches over





Harry and Emilia Rathbun in their Palo Alto home, ca. 1982, at about the time Creative Initiative was disbanded in favor of Beyond War. *Courtesy Creative Initiative Foundation.*



the limited resources of their mutual members. The decision to form a separate sect, however, was not a calculated maneuver to aggrandize the organization. These pressures and tensions had built up slowly over fifteen years, and the members of Sequoia Seminar were genuinely concerned about their strained relationship with the mainline churches. Certainly none of the substantial middle-class people who were active in the group would have consciously advocated starting a new religion so that they could enhance their own institutional position. But there was a second set of philosophical and personal forces operating, and these reinforced the organization drift to produce a new religion.

Since at least 1945 Harry and Emilia Rathbun had dreamed of a self-contained community that would have a truly revolutionary impact on the destiny of humankind. Philosophically, however, Sequoia Seminar was too much of a continuation of the ideas of Henry B. Sharman and not sufficiently enough an expression of the Rathbuns' thoughts. Clearly, too, Sequoia Seminar could never be the vanguard of the new age as long as it remained linked to mainline churches and their traditional values. For the Rathbuns' philosophy to flower, it needed the freedom that could only come with spiritual independence. The organizational structure of a new sect was in place, as was the basic ideology of a new religion, but the group awaited some appropriate event that would justify a break with the established churches and permit them to create their own. Not surprisingly, that event occurred to Emilia, and through her the gospel study group became a sect.

From 1959 to 1962 Emilia had undergone a variety of stresses in her life. In addition to the conflicts she was experiencing with church people, she had a falling out with a group of long-time Sequoia Seminar members who felt the need to escape the Rathbuns' tight rein. Emilia also had to contend with Harry's retirement and the resulting loss of income. Financial problems sent her back to college to get her credential and she began to teach elementary school, but she was not happy. Finally, she suffered a series of physical illnesses that had no obvious organic origin. Beset on all sides by crises, Emilia was gripped by a mounting sense of anticipation that God would provide some solution to the problems of the movement.

The crisis resolved in 1962 when, during one of her mysterious illnesses, she experienced a vision of

Christ who told her, "I'm going to have communion with you in the new covenant and drink it anew from the kingdom of God."<sup>58</sup> She interpreted these words to mean that she was to start a "New Religion of the Third Age." Thus the logjam was broken. Because there was no way in which this new religion could have any direct ties with old religions, those who chose to work with Emilia in the new sect would have to terminate their memberships in the mainline churches. Unchained from other churches, Sequoia Seminar could grow and change to encompass the Rathbuns' unique religious philosophy. As the spiritual leader of this new sect, Emilia found the sense of personal fulfillment that she had been seeking for many years.

The new religion, Creative Initiative, like Sequoia Seminar before it, underwent a process of evolution before it eventually emerged as a formal organization. In the 1960s and 1970s Creative Initiative flourished in the San Francisco Bay Area. Under the tutelage of Harry and Emilia, the group sought to spread their message of ecology, brotherhood, and peaceful conflict resolution. Sustained by the ideas they had formed in the late 1930s, the Rathbuns worked tirelessly to educate individuals in the psychological, philosophical, and mystical techniques that would enable them to evolve into harbingers of the new era. They believed that they had a divine mandate to act as a "collective messiah" ushering in a third age of harmony to save the earth from the scourge of atomic war.

In 1982, however, when they failed to spread significantly beyond the San Francisco peninsula, they concluded that their religious vision was actually an obstacle to the vital mission of attracting new people. Their belief that they were the successor to the Jewish and Christian traditions, their unique philosophy, the unusual ceremonies they had formulated, and their deep commitment to marriage and traditional gender roles, all served as barriers to recruitment. Because the message was more important than the medium, they chose to dissolve the New Religion and to replace it with a secular movement called Beyond War. Shorn of all religious trappings, Beyond War has grown in a way that eluded its predecessor. Today it has active groups in twenty-five states and a paid newsletter mailing list of more than eighteen thousand people.

There was nothing inevitable about the emergence of what the Rathbuns called "the New Religion of the Third Age." It was the fruition of a



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variety of historical forces that came together at a given moment. In an institutional sense, Emilia's revelation did not create a sect so much as confirm one. The organizational dynamic of Sequoia Seminar and the philosophical vision of the Rathbuns had driven the group to the point where it had to break from the mainline churches to which it was tied by the Sharman tradition. Emilia's religious mysticism freed the group to continue growing. The prophet's vision, if it may be called that, was not the genesis of the group, but simply one more step in a historical continuum of change. Removed from the synchronic psycho-socio moment of revelation, the appearance of this new sect can be seen as the product of historical sources, not the least of which were the internal dynamics of the organization itself. Sequoia Seminar became Creative Initiative not because one woman had a religious insight

on a particular day in 1962, but because the people affiliated with the group shared their leaders' values, built an organization to further them, and eventually found themselves caught in a trap that stifled their growth. As their spiritual leader, Emilia suffered the same frustrations as her followers, as well as additional personal problems. Taken altogether, the process of first creating and then resolving these group and individual crises was the source of religious sectarianism. CHS

*See notes beginning on page 81.*

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*Steven M. Gelber is Associate Professor of History at Santa Clara University. He is co-author of Saving the Earth: The History of a Middle Class Millenarian Movement (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1990) and is currently studying the history of American hobbies.*

# Maynard Dixon as Muralist:

## SKETCHES FOR THE MARK HOPKINS HOTEL MURALS

by Paul O. Bingham  
and  
Beverly Bubar Denenberg

Maynard Dixon was a unique painter of his generation in the West. He was a progressive who refused to follow the old school painters who had trained in European academies and who were only prepared to represent the grand scenes of Yosemite, or to endlessly repeat sentimental bouquets as gallery commodities. Dixon's approach to painting was reviewed in March 1925 by Ruth Pielkovo, writing in the *International Studio*:

Dixon has something to give that is entirely his own. In choice of subject matter, in his austere reactions to his surroundings, his work is stamped by complete spiritual integrity . . . [and] . . . poetry. The technique is unique almost to starkness. Yet there is always organization, a marching rhythm of design; . . . a master draughtsman, he is also a daring colorist . . . particularly successful in mural decoration. Here his subject matter, rhythmical balance of composition and decorative values have full play. In his work is the spirit of America, of both land and race, rendered with truth, and which will be, as is all great art, the heritage of the whole world.

Dixon was one of America's quintessential painters in spirit and in substance; his revelations and interpretations occur in all three aspects of his work—easel paintings, illustrations, and murals.

Born into an asthmatic childhood in Fresno in 1875, Dixon was a paid professional artist at the age of twenty; he received \$10 per week from the San Francisco *Morning Call* to illustrate stories and

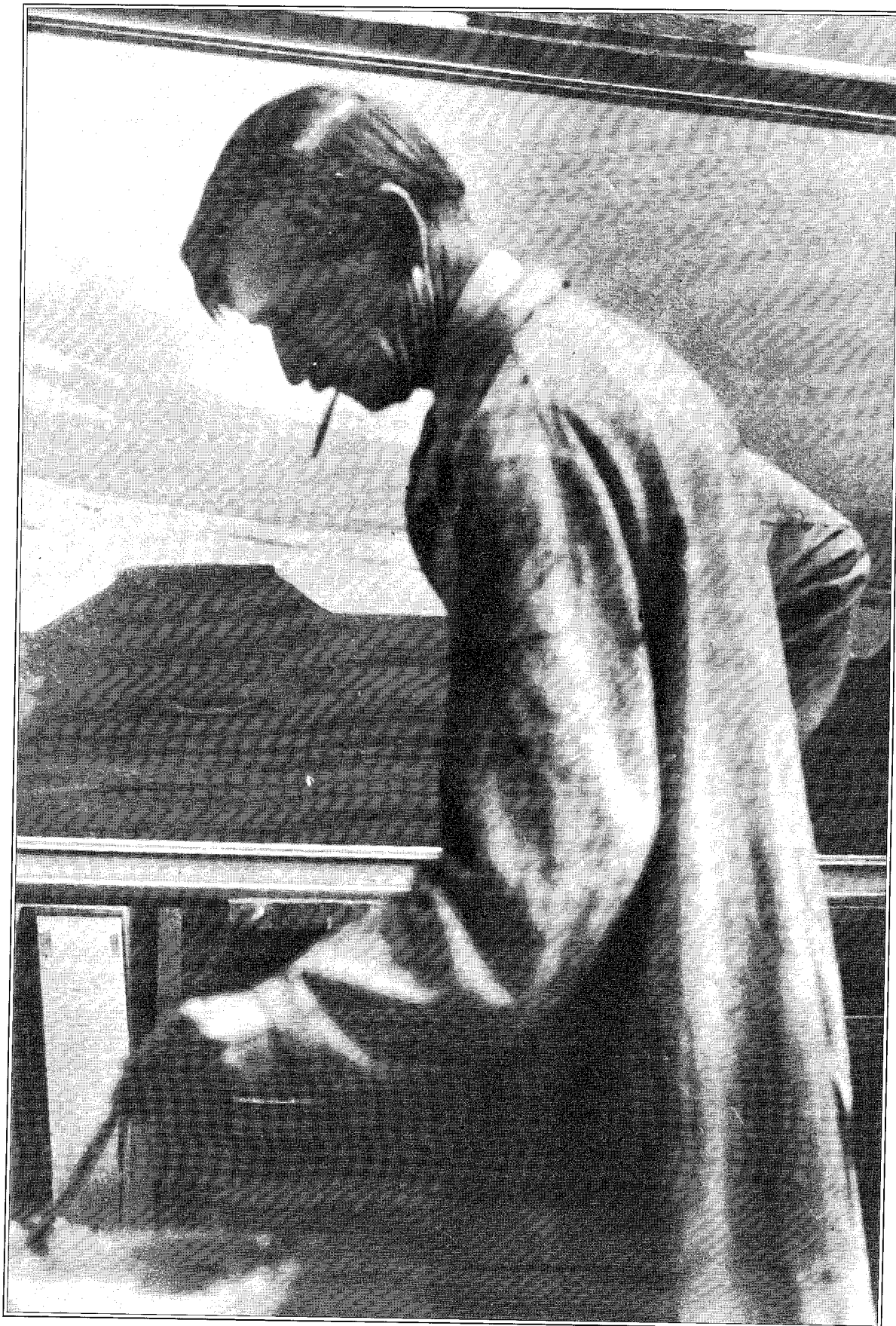
draw portraits of the likes of Jack London, Bruce Porter, and Charles Lummis. In 1904 he was able at last to travel the fabled West. On several of these trips he joined artists Edward Borein and Xavier Martinez, and lecturer and photographer Frederick Munson. Together they sought the experience of the cowboy, the Indian, and the miner.

By the end of the year he was a member of the Bohemian Club, and had begun to receive serious attention as an artist. Several paintings were shown in December 1905 at the San Francisco Artists' Society exhibition at the Palace Hotel; the simple linearity and strong lights and darks of these earliest oils prefigure the later mural style.

After the loss of nearly his entire production in the earthquake and fire of 1906, Dixon moved to Sausalito and continued working for several newspapers. Nevertheless, it was a welcome relief in early 1906 when he received his first commission for mural decorations for the Southern Pacific railway station in Tucson, Arizona—four commissioned panels portraying salient features of the desert region: "The Cattlemen," "The Apache," "The Prospector," and "Irrigation." These were quickly executed and installed before Dixon left for New York and, unknowingly, an economic depression.

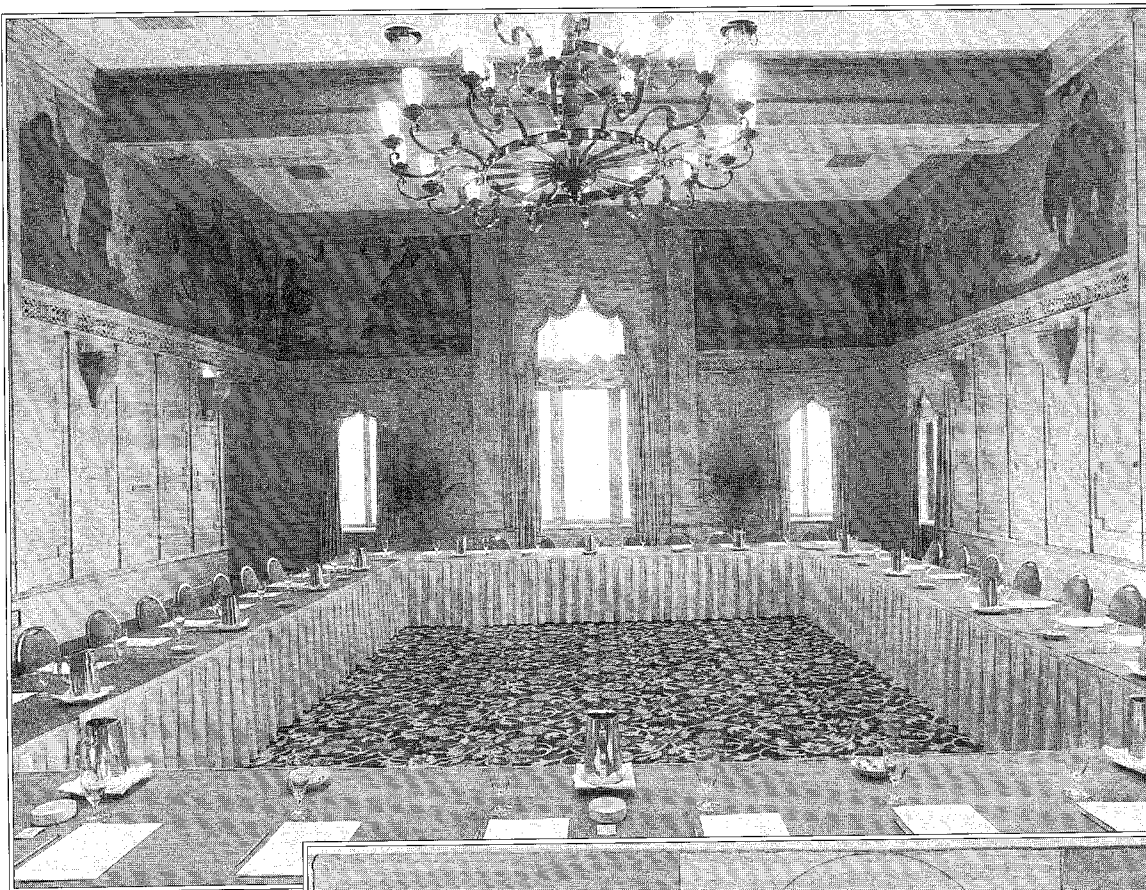
With great good fortune, his illustrations of western life remained very popular. During the next five years Dixon exhibited at the National Academy of Design (1911), the Architectural League,





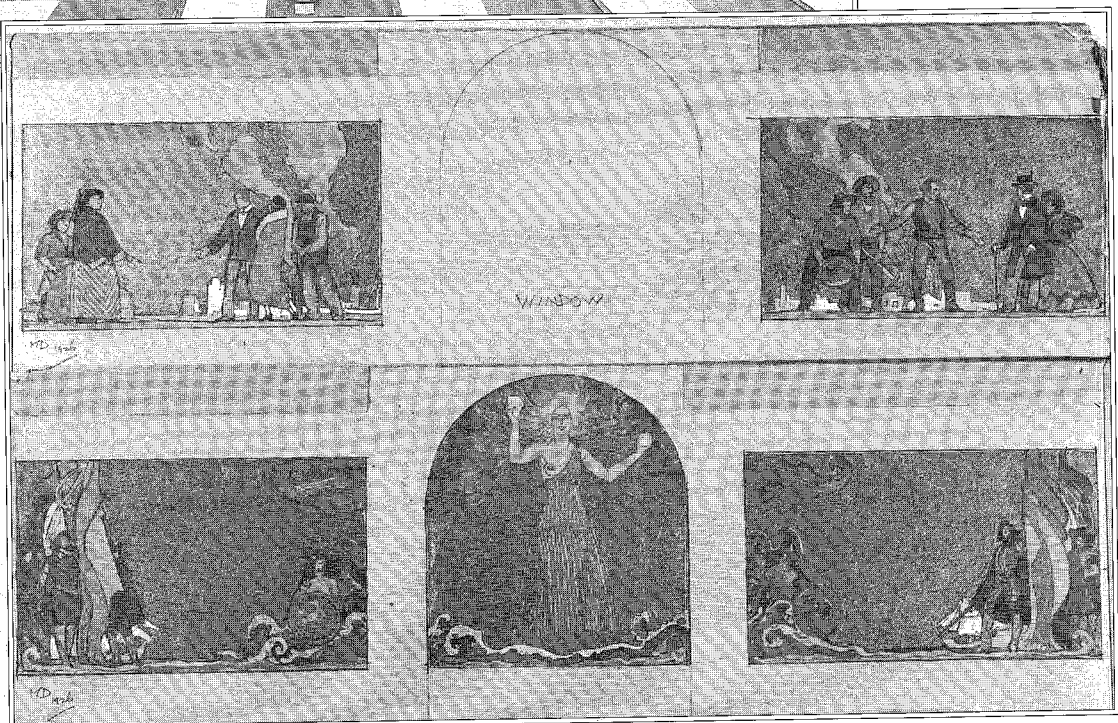
Maynard Dixon. *Courtesy California State Library.*





Room of the Dons as seen today at the Mark Hopkins Intercontinental Hotel, San Francisco. The 1926 Dixon/ Van Sloun murals continue to grace this room, which is used for special meetings and events. *Courtesy Bingham Gallery, San Jose, California.*

Maynard Dixon sketches for the two room ends, 1926. The upper panels depict placer miners and city dwellers in the Gold Rush era (upper right), and Chinese and other Californians (upper left). Lower panels depict the mythical Calafia (also shown in full color on the back cover of this issue) flanked by her topless warrior maidens and European explorers. *Courtesy Bingham Gallery, San Jose, California.*





the Salamagundi Club, and the New York Society of Illustrators, and was elected to membership in these prestigious institutions.\* Years of economic compromise, meeting deadlines, and dealing with the pressures of illustrating romantic potboilers "for an insatiable eastern establishment" finally led Maynard Dixon back to his home on the West Coast in early 1912. "I am being paid to lie about the west, the country I know and care about" he complained. "I'm going back home where I can do honest work."

These honest motives led him in the right path, right to Anita Baldwin McClaghry, daughter of "Lucky" Baldwin, the mining magnate and horseman. Her estate in Sierra Madre, near Los Angeles, needed "decorations"—four Indian subjects and eight subjects for the "jinks" room rendered in old English style. Dixon reflected on this opportunity:

My return from New York to the old studio on Montgomery Street marked the beginning of my real development. I was getting a new direction rather than a new manner and beginning to find myself. And it was Anita Baldwin who gave me my first chance in that direction. Her encouragement of my ideals and her purchase of two of my easel paintings, followed by the order for mural paintings to be done as I wanted to do them, gave me a start. I saw and always had seen something wonderful here in America. As a painter, then, I date from 1912.

Otheman Stevens's favorable criticism of Dixon's Baldwin murals appeared in the Los Angeles *Examiner* on November 9, 1914:

In Indian Hall to the left is a returning war party of Sioux. It is a home-going after a raid, with the savage tragedy of those old events eloquently sung by the desperate figure of the white girl. Another mural shows the superstitious terror on a craggy ledge during burial ceremony. Here is a vigor of space, an intensity rarely equalled in a painting . . . . These are works of lasting and growing worth.

Anthony Anderson of the Los Angeles *Times* also wrote in 1914:

\*The sources for this essay, including citations for quotations, are Grant Wallace, *Maynard Dixon: Painter and Poet of the Far West* (San Francisco: California Art Research Project, 1937), and Edith Hamlin, "Maynard Dixon, Artist of the West," *California Historical Society Quarterly* LIII (Winter 1974).

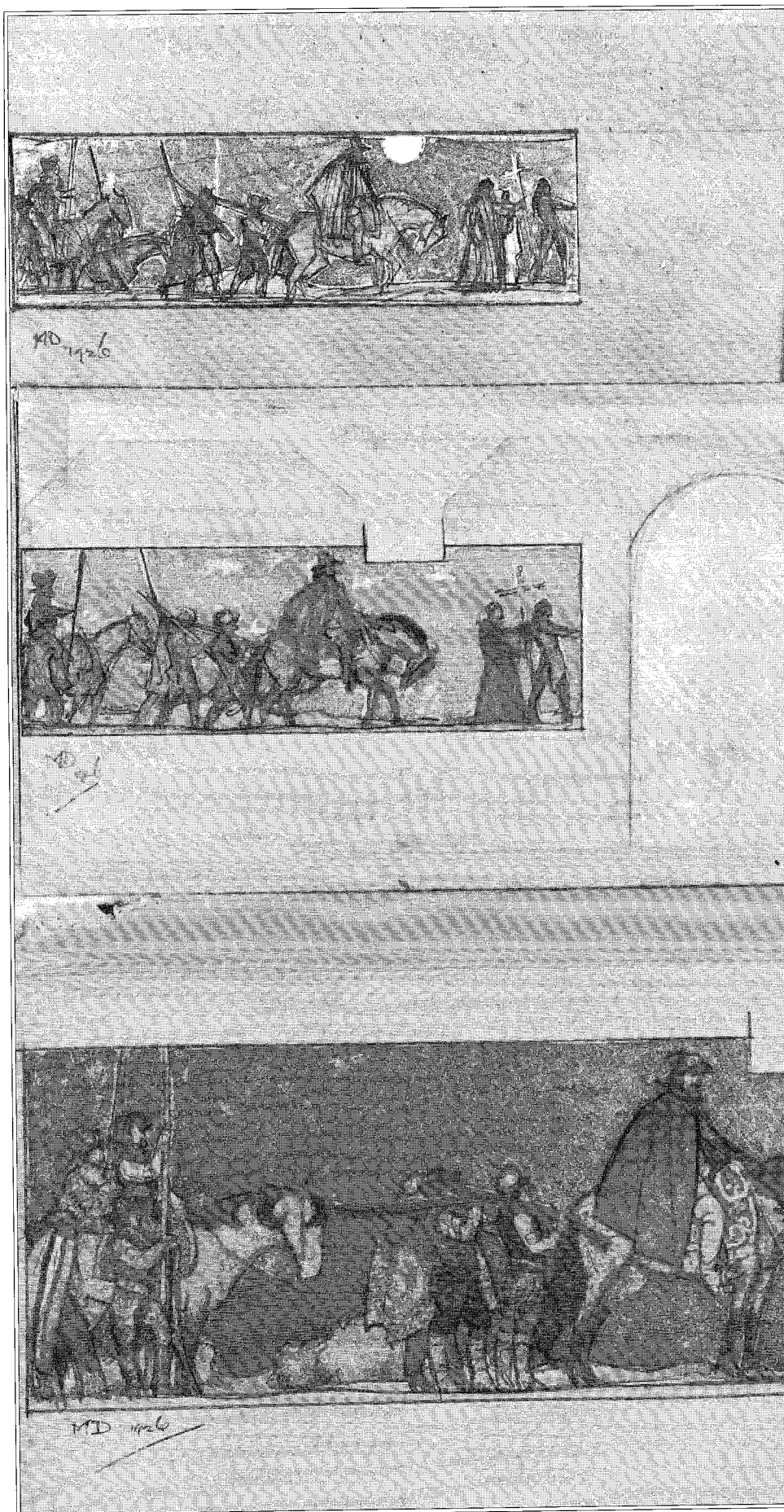
Maynard Dixon felt the West as few other painters have felt it and the Indians he paints are the real thing, not impossible beings imagined in a studio. Therefore they are truly poetic and interpretive . . . at times even epic . . . because Dixon's vision is that of the poet. And he shows the poetry of far horizons and tremendous sky spaces. These things make his decorations notable even if you leave out of count the superb and appropriate and daring and successful composition. He has the decorative instinct in a marked degree. His work is epochal. It marks a new era in art in Southern California.

It is unclear why Dixon discontinued mural work for several years. He exhibited paintings at the Bohemian Club in 1915, the same year as the Panama Pacific International Exposition. It is known that he suffered from ill health and was experiencing domestic problems as well. In any case, in 1921, he received a contract to do two lunettes, each eight by sixteen feet, for the dining salon of the *Silver State*, a Pacific Mail Steamship. The following year his patrons gave him another contract for their latest ship, the *Sierra*, which he completed in 1923.

In 1924 and 1925 Dixon received commissions for a sixteen-by-nine foot mural for the foyer of the Spring Valley Water Company in San Francisco, and two huge canvases, twenty by six-and-one-half feet for the Barker Brothers Building in Los Angeles. The latter was painted with thin and absorbent paint that gave the fabric the appearance of hand-woven linen. In 1925 he made a simple studio screen as a room divider in three panels measuring 79 by 93 inches, which prefigure the cubist/realist shapes of his later aesthetic; this aesthetic, with its bold color and flatness of form, reached an epitome in two paintings of the 1930s entitled "Earth Knower" and "Wild Horses of Nevada." The latter oil was shown for the last time at the Cincinnati Museum in 1932, and is considered by many to be the culmination of his decorative capacity.

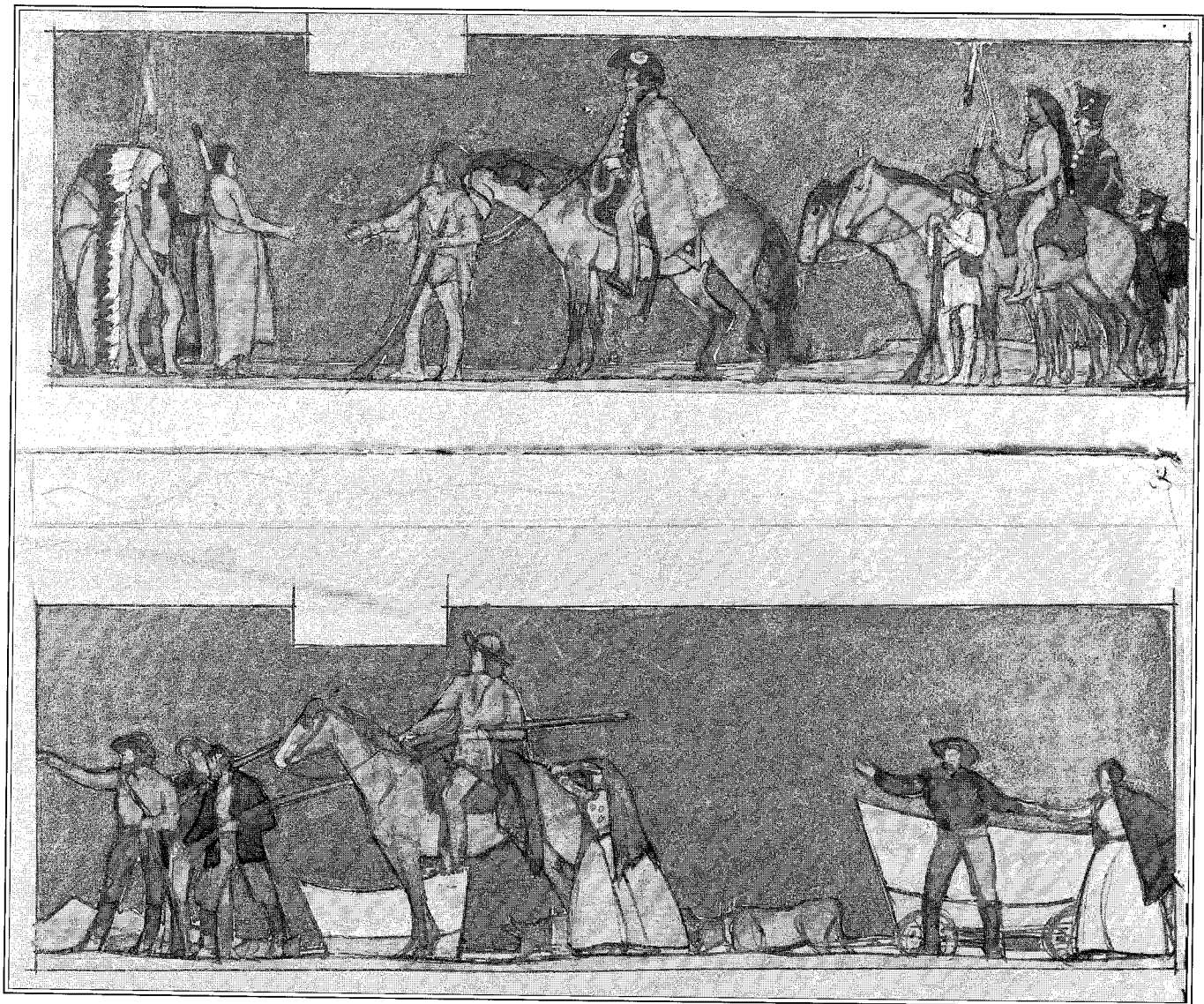
Dixon's work on the Mark Hopkins murals, the subject of this article, began in 1926. In that year, Charles P. Weeks, of Weeks and Day, architects for the newly-opened Mark Hopkins Hotel, offered Dixon and Frank Van Sloun a commission for a nine-section frieze for the ballroom called "Hall of the Dons." The hotel was built on





A succession of drafts by Maynard Dixon of the Room of the Dons mural panel depicting Father Junípero Serra arriving from Mexico in 1769 to implant Spanish colonial culture in California. These sketches illustrate the evolution and refinement of Dixon's mural art.





Just as Hispanic culture moved north into California, Anglo-American culture moved west. In Dixon's upper sketch for the Mark Hopkins Hotel mural, American frontiersmen from the eastern seaboard encounter the Plains Indians. In the lower panel, California-bound pioneers trek west across the Overland Trail. The view that California and the Southwest constituted a "borderlands culture," a unique blend of Hispanic and Anglo-American traditions, was introduced in the early twentieth century by the great historian Herbert Bolton and was popular when Maynard Dixon was painting. Several of Dixon's murals incorporate the "borderlands" theory. *Courtesy Bingham Gallery, San Jose, California.*

the site of the former San Francisco Art Association, which had occupied the Mark Hopkins mansion until its destruction in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Dixon's first sketches were drawn on the back of a restaurant menu. In all, three separate submissions were made before the final resolution and synthesis of Van Sloun's and Dixon's concepts in 1926.

A review of the Dixon/Van Sloun murals by Junius

Cravens appeared in *The Argonaut* of January 27, 1927:

In a lunette at one end of the room stands a robed allegorical figure flanked by a historic pageant which continues around the four walls to a large window opposite, at either side of which the progression ends with groups of figures symbolizing lands that lie beyond the Golden Gate. Richly suggestive, rather than



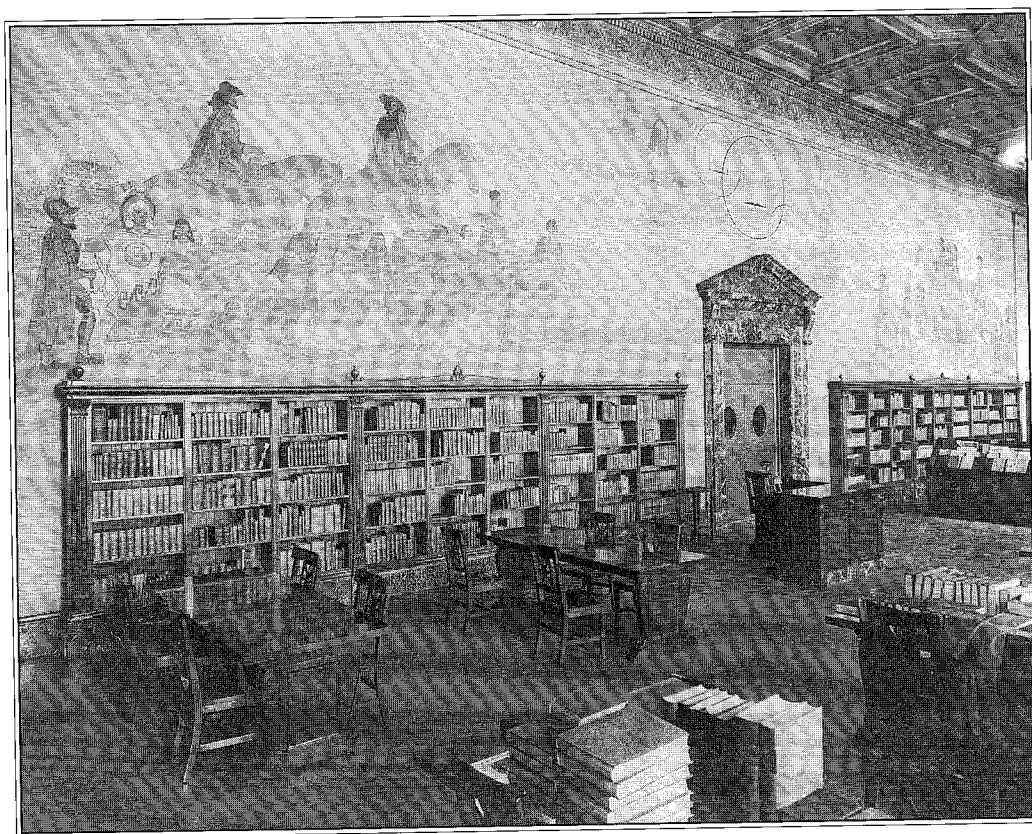
narrative, the pageant includes characters representative of both the real and the traditional history of California from remote times to 1849. The painting is rich in color and design throughout, against a background of flat gold.

Mr. Dixon and Mr. Van Sloun are to be complimented, not only on their individual work, but on having surmounted the difficulties attendant upon this form of combined effort. They have blended their separate personalities into a perfectly unified and harmonious decoration, consistent throughout.

The Mark Hopkins project, as well as a 14 x 70-foot mural in the reading room of the State Library at Sacramento, were part of Dixon's most significant period of work, which ended in 1929. During five productive years he had completed 9 mural commissions, 120 easel paintings, and hundreds of drawings. His work was featured

in a dozen exhibitions, and "his insistence that good wall decoration be an integral part of architectural ensemble was bearing fruit." WPA biographer Grant Wallace noted that "... but for the sudden and disastrous clamping down of hard times on all building and allied activities, this cooperation [between architect and artist] would have multiplied ... [Dixon's] murals and his fame."

After the Great Depression of 1929 it was four years before government-aided projects brought assistance to artists. In this period, Dixon produced 111 oil paintings—but sold only 24. He prepared mural sketches for the Sacramento Sutter Club and the Southwest Museum of Los Angeles, but abandoned the work when funding fell through. In 1934, a set of 8 mural drawings for the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts Rotunda and another set of two dozen paintings and drawings for Boulder Dam



Dixon's mural for the main reading room of the California State Library, Sacramento, was completed in 1926. *Courtesy California State Library.*



# MAYNARD DIXON MURALS

Originally compiled in Grant Wallace, *Maynard Dixon: Painter and Poet of the Far West* (San Francisco: California Art Research Project, 1937), this list includes three later murals (noted with asterisks) completed after publication of the book.

- |      |  |       |   |
|------|--|-------|---|
| 1907 | Railway Station, Tucson, Arizona. Four panels: Cattlemen, Apache, Miner, Irrigation  | —     | Oakland Technical High School, Oakland. Auditorium, proscenium.   |
| 1913 | Residence, Mrs. Anita Baldwin, Arcadia, California. Indian Hall, two panels: Victory Song, Envoys of Peace; The Pool, Ghost Eagle. | 1928  | California State Library, Sacramento. Main Reading Room, A Pageant of Traditions: Science, Philosophy, Religion, Beauty, Power.             |
| 1914 | Residence, Mrs. Anita Baldwin. Old English Jinks Room, eight panels: Merry Yuletide Scenes.  | 1929  | U. S. Building and Loan Association, San Francisco. Office panel.   |
| 1921 | Steamship <i>Silver State</i> . Dining Saloon, two lunettes.   | —     | Arizona Biltmore Hotel, Phoenix. Dining Room, painted hanger.   |
| 1923 | Steamship <i>Sierra</i> . Dining Saloon, panel.  | 1933  | John Charles Frémont High School, Los Angeles. Study Hall, south wall.  |
| 1924 | Spring Valley Water Company, San Francisco. Foyer.   | 1936  | Kit Carson Cafe, San Francisco. Two panels.   |
| 1925 | Shop of Harry Dixon, San Francisco. Overmantel.  | —     | Residence, Mrs. J. A. Hoffman, Ventura. The Pony Boy, Blackfoot, Montana.   |
| —    | Barker Brothers Building, Los Angeles. Foyer, two painted hangers.   | —     | Newbegin Gallery, San Francisco. Warriors of Montana.   |
| 1926 | Mark Hopkins Hotel, San Francisco. Room of the Dons, in collaboration with Frank Van Sloun, frieze in nine sections.               | 1939* | U. S. Government Building of Indian Affairs, Dept. of Interior Bldg., Washington, D. C. Two panels: The Indian Yesterday; The Indian Today. |
| 1927 | Oakland Theatre, Oakland. Foyer, Spirit of India.  | 1943* | Post Office, Canoga Park, California. Panel: Palomino Ponies.   |
|      |  | —*    | Post Office, Martinez, California. Panel.   |

were forwarded to Washington, but again, monies were not forthcoming. Tedious WPA projects and the Depression dampened his spirit and darkened his sense of artistic enlightenment.

In the final decade of his life, Dixon completed a mural for the Kit Carson Cafe in San Francisco (1936); designed two murals, "The Indian Yesterday" and "The Indian Today," for the foyer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior building in Washington, D. C. (1939-40); and received commissions for two post office murals in the cities of Martinez and Canoga Park, California (1943). In 1946, the year of his death, Dixon designed his last mural—for the Santa Fe Railway's Pershing Square office in Los Angeles. Due to his failing health, this final work was executed

by his dedicated wife, Edith Hamlin, and her fellow artists Ray Strong and Buck Weaver. Hamlin left a succinct and fitting recollection of her husband: "Maynard loved America, with its traditions and folklore, deeply; a strong sense of its history permeated his writings and murals." [CHS]

*Paul O. Bingham, noted expert on the work of Maynard Dixon, is the owner of the Bingham Gallery, San Jose.*

*Beverly Bubar Denenberg holds a Master of Arts in museology from San Francisco State University and is vice president of Denenberg Fine Arts in San Francisco. She is also former curator of fine arts for the California Historical Society.*



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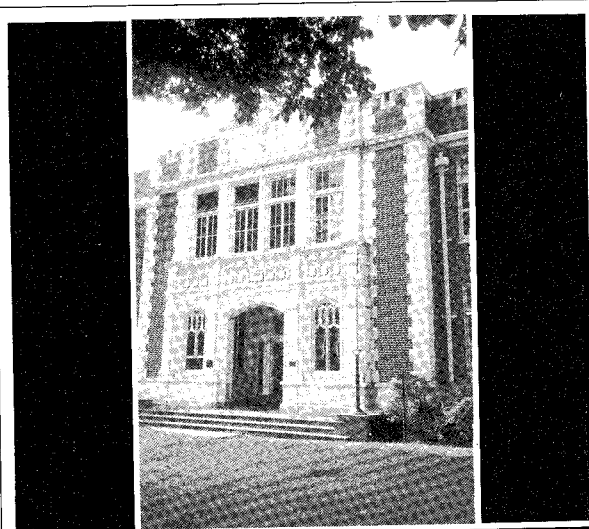
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*Edited by James J. Rawls*

*If the Walls Could Talk:  
Colusa's Architectural Heritage.*

By Jane Foster Carter. (Colusa, California: Heritage Preservation Committee, 1988, xxi, 305 pp., \$40 cloth.)

*Architectural Records in the  
San Francisco Bay Area.*

Edited by Waverly B. Lowell. (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988, xvii, 350 pp., \$47 cloth.)

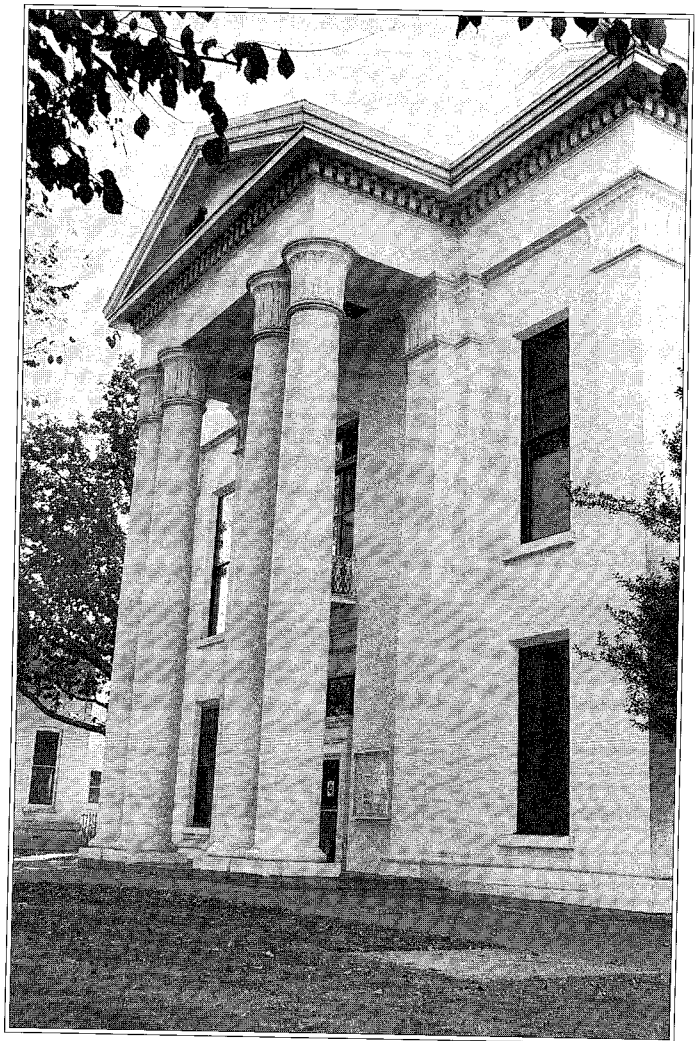
*California Architecture.*

By Sally B. Woodbridge. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988, xi, 274 pp., \$35 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)

*Reviewed by Robert W. Winter, Arthur G. Coons Professor of the History of Ideas at Occidental College and author of The California Bungalow.*

In moments of reverie I recall days past when you could count the books on the history of California architecture on the fingers of one hand. There was Harold Kirker's pioneering *California's Architectural Frontier* (1960) and a few fairly good things on the missions, and that was it, leaving out Esther McCoy's writings on the "Moderns" as not being history—which they now are! With the recent publication of three new architectural histories I am now embarrassed by riches.

These three are actually very different books. The best way to begin, I think, is to look at Sally B. Woodbridge's *California Architecture*, for it is the most comprehensive of the books under survey and at the same time will have the widest readership. The occasion for its publication is a celebration of a half century in which the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) has been measuring, photographing, and accumulating data on California buildings that are, for a variety of reasons, significant architecture. It is a proud moment in the annals of the California Historical Society; for in 1975 it was named cosponsor with HABS of a catalogue of the work of students of architecture who had drafted plans and collected material since 1933, when HABS was set up as an annex of the



Designed by Marysville architect Vincent Brown in the Classical Revival style and completed in 1861, the Colusa County Court House is the second oldest existing courthouse in use in California. The strong Greek Revival and southern architectural character of the building reflects the antebellum heritage of early county pioneers. It was dedicated California Historic Landmark No. 890 at Colusa's bicentennial celebration on July 4, 1976. *Courtesy Robert E. Kessinger, Jr.*

Civil Works Administration, one of Franklin Roosevelt's antidotes to the evils of the Great Depression. The Society wisely chose Sally Woodbridge, a veteran of the compilation of architectural guidebooks and of several works in California architectural history, to bring together the results of the project. It took her ten years to complete this book, about half of which is an essay on the history of California architecture, the other half being a listing with short commentaries on the nearly 20,000 entries.

It was a very large undertaking absolutely riddled with opportunities for errors of fact and interpretation. Woodbridge has nobly managed to set aside most obstacles. She had sound research behind her. Furthermore, the survey has been remarkable for its discrimination and good judgment. True, there are strange quirks, such as the complete neglect of the small but remarkable assemblage of important buildings in Ojai and the much larger assemblage in Berkeley, but the vast number that are included certainly give a good background from which to draw a significant history. HABS has in fact almost from the first broadened the scope of its interest from structures such as houses, churches, and commercial buildings to barns, mills, bridges, and jails—even tombstones and architectural hardware. This book is thus a priceless document of social history.

Woodbridge writes with precision, and, not incidentally, with a love of the English language, traits not always in the intellectual baggage of art historians. She is alert to special qualities of California architecture, as well as to its relationship to the standard American styles. She finds time to write about pre-fabricated buildings that were designed on the East Coast and shipped around Cape Horn. What will surprise many readers is the number of ready-builts that came from China in the middle of the nineteenth century. They will find, moreover, almost all they need to know about the missions and their culture. Woodbridge is able to do this because they were so well documented by HABS in the thirties and later. Indeed, one has the feeling that her material correctly dictates even the length of her text.

Naturally, a few mistakes drift in. Historians who are pre-occupied with styles will not like her consistent confusion of Classical Revival with Neo-Georgian buildings. Amusingly, El Molino Viejo, the southern California headquarters of the

California Historical Society, is not in Pasadena, even though it should be. It is in San Marino. And since, as she says, it was built somewhere around 1816, it could not possibly have been damaged by the 1812 earthquake, as she alleges. But such errors are rare and are certainly understandable considering the fact that she was working from the findings of so many other people.

Woodbridge seems more comfortable when discussing the architecture of northern California than she is when writing about that in the southern part of the state. Her text is strongly weighted toward the north. The other two books under review are consciously so weighted, for their authors frankly admit to a special interest in the Bay Area. They chart a smaller territory. *Architectural Records in the San Francisco Bay Area* is a publication of the California Cooperative Preservation of Architectural Records with the intimidating acronym CalCOPAR—really, what are we coming to? The book is a serious effort to bring together a knowledge of the architectural archives in or near San Francisco in order that historians and preservationists, who need to understand the precise way buildings are conceived and grow, may find their way to sources of information.

It is a technical book, with archives divided into lists under four categories. The first is an attempt to specify the kind of holdings that remain in architectural offices. A typical entry chosen not quite by random would be "Pflueger Architects, 1976-," a firm that still exists and whose important history goes back to its organization just after World War I. There is, in fact, a short but very valuable history of the firm and its significant projects, in this case, such buildings as the Paramount Theater in Oakland and the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange in San Francisco, both monuments of the Art Deco. After the history comes a detailed description of the kind of material that is left in the files. A short section labelled "Access" tells the reader the best way to use the files. The hard work in amassing this information is admirable. Needless to say, the value of the research found here lies in more than an essay on where the information is. It is a contribution to history.

CalCOPAR's second list, marked "Repositories," is an inventory of more conventional archives, such as the great collections of the California Historical Society, and also of less famous but useful ones, such as the Roman Catholic



Diocese of Oakland. Government records are well presented and analyzed in a third listing. A final section simply lists "San Francisco Architects in Practice 1850-1910" and the dates and addresses of their various offices. A very complete index closes a book that in the course of its dispensation of information gives excellent tips to researchers. Even ideas are strewn about for careful readers.

By this time readers will have realized that the one topic that holds these books together is their contribution to the movement for architectural preservation. The beautifully produced *If the Walls Could Talk* by Jane Foster Carter is but another way of acknowledging the force of this movement. The subject of this book is the almost completely undistinguished architecture of Colusa, one of the prettiest little towns in the state. After a short and not very helpful introductory essay on the history of Colusa by W. H. Hutchinson, who seems obsessed by floods of the Sacramento River, Carter gets down to business and documents 240 buildings that I assume were chosen because they were "significant structures . . . that comprise the unique historical and architectural character of Colusa," point number one in the list of objectives of the town's survey, completed in 1980.

My problem is with the word "unique." Frankly, I believe that "if the walls could talk," they would not say much except that Colusa is a nice little farm center on the Sacramento River and that in an extraordinarily modest way, it reflects the main currents of American architecture in the period 1860 to the present. I remember that, when I visited Colusa in 1971, only the Courthouse and the I.O.O.F. Hall impressed me as being in any way distinctive. I am afraid that the book's illustrations, beautifully rendered, confirm my judgment. I missed a few things in the residential districts, but mainly I was correct in seeing this as a town where "the nostalgia cult" could experience a relatively unspoiled California small town of the turn-of-the-century.

My point is not to disparage such volumes, even though I wish they would own up to the fact that they are documents of the commonplace. The great gift of a book like this is to give the residents of a community a sense of place and an identity with it. That is certainly a worthy objective and deserving of such a beautifully produced work. In fact, it is only after many inventories such as this one that a definitive history of California

architecture can be written. All three of the books reviewed here contribute to this high cause. CHS

### *California Painters: New Work.*

By Henry T. Hopkins and Jim McHugh (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989, 143 pp., \$40 cloth, \$22.95 paper.)

*Reviewed by Timothy W. Drescher, Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Humanities at San Francisco State University and former editor of Community Murals Magazine.*

*California Painters: New Work* presents two or three examples of recent works by each of 41 California painters. Henry T. Hopkins's brief "Introduction" places this highly selective survey in both art history and geographic contexts. Hopkins knows the turf, and his observations are both authoritative and helpful, as when he notes the importance of Los Angeles sunlight in southern California works and the significance of figuration in the Bay Area in the late fifties and sixties. His gracious prefatory acknowledgements underscore the difficulty of making such a selection in a state wherein reside hundreds of excellent artists who, he suggests, may well comprise "the new creative center of the nation." (p.15) Equally to his credit, Hopkins's selection includes both women and artists of color.

The presentations, arranged alphabetically, offer statements by the artists ranging from the thoughtful to the non-existent (from those who want their works to speak for themselves). Jim McHugh's superb photographs of both the paintings and the artists are exactly the sort that make the reader want to see more of the work and to get to know the artists, perhaps provoking the latent voyeur in each of us curious to see the face of the creator.

The weakness of the book is in neither the text nor in the work presented, but in the format itself: the Christmas-coffee-table-gift-book. As always in the best of such books, excellent text and photography are not enough to dispel the uncomfortable feeling, for both Hopkins and the reader, that too many worthy artists have been left out, that too few works of those selected are shown, and that what is reproduced is too distorted by the wrenching of scale and context necessitated by the publishing format. Indeed, the commodification of the



San Francisco's Chinatown drew immigrants and quickly became a fully-functioning community in the nineteenth century. Families, including children like these, were part of the society. Chinese American workers rode the early morning cable cars out to work, and filled the late-evening cars headed downtown toward home. Arnold Genthe's photographs, taken between 1895 and the earthquake of 1906, vividly depicted the life of the Chinese in San Francisco. CHS Library, San Francisco.

coffee-table format provides a tangible experience of the social and individual fragmentation underlying so much of modern art and the works so beautifully presented here. CHS

## *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924.*

By Yuji Ichioka. (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, Inc., 1988, xii, 319 pp., \$22.95 cloth.)

## *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850.*

By Roger Daniels. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988, xviii, 384 pp., \$24.95 cloth.)

*Reviewed by Donald Teruo Hata, Jr., Professor of History at California State University, Dominguez Hills.*

The Chinese were the first trans-Pacific migrants to arrive in large numbers during the California Gold Rush. As the gold boom passed, they sought work wherever it could be found—in railroad construction and rural and urban jobs of every kind. Instead of appearing as participants in the development of the West, however, the Chinese were collectively typecast as an "indispensable enemy" by a growing coalition of racists,

nativists, and xenophobes. By 1900 a series of federal laws had banned Chinese immigration. The result was a labor vacuum that was filled by growing numbers of Japanese. The newcomers were informed about the climate of hostility toward the Chinese, but the "push" factors in Japan (crushing taxes and conscription) far outweighed the anticipated problems in America. The Issei, literally the "first generation" of Japanese in America, soon confirmed that they had inherited the hostility toward Chinese, and, because of the growing strength of their homeland, were even more at risk as the tabloid press targeted them as a threat to national security—the "Yellow Peril." While the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provided for citizenship to aliens who intended to immigrate, the naturalization process was denied to the Chinese and Japanese. Their official status, as expressed in the clumsy phrase "aliens ineligible to citizenship," meant that Asians were considered unworthy of being immigrants and future citizens, a condition that continued until 1950, when the U.S. Supreme Court finally declared California's 1912 alien land laws unconstitutional (*Fujii v. State*).

A dramatic shift in popular images of the Chinese and Japanese in America since World War II, from "Yellow Peril" to "model minority," has revealed certain problems regarding their place in the historiography of U.S. immigration. Ignorance and avarice seem to have been equally powerful causal factors, as friends, apologists, and enemies of Chinese and Japanese Americans have distorted or omitted facts in order to produce the desired stereotype. With few exceptions, they are still treated as anonymous victims of isolated acts of violence (1871 Chinese massacre in Los Angeles) or wartime hysteria



(Japanese Americans in World War II). The overwhelming emphasis on Asian Americans as victims also perpetuates their image of powerlessness—as an odd group whose experience is peripheral to the mainstream of pervasive themes in American immigration history—and that in turn reinforces stereotypes of Asians as anonymous and permanent aliens.

It was not until the 1960s that research into Chinese and Japanese American history began to challenge the Horatio Alger-style “success stories” that characterized the first postwar histories of Asian Americans written by both sympathetic scholars and ethnic insiders themselves. Among the most influential revisionist pioneers was Roger Daniels, who exhorted his colleagues to approach Asian Americans as the subjects, as well as the objects, of their scrutiny. Daniels observed that most historians have “shown very little sympathy with . . . those forces in American life which sought to drive the Asians out,” but chastised them for showing “very little understanding of the excluded—the Asian Americans themselves . . . [Historians] have insisted or implied that Asians were somehow outside the canon of immigrant history. Other immigrant groups were celebrated for what they had accomplished; Asians were important for what had been done to them.” (p. 6)

In many ways the chronology and themes of Ichioka's *The Issei* resemble Daniels's first publication, twenty years ago—*The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (1968)—but now the focus is on Issei as the subjects, rather than objects, of the study. With the insights provided by Japanese language sources, the Issei story is all the more an epic saga of survival in the face of indomitable odds, for they were often manipulated by both their own government and self-styled Issei community representatives, as well as by the public and private forces of opposition arrayed against them in the United States. Ichioka's Issei—both men and women—include a grubby and gritty cast of characters: pimps and picture brides, drunks, draft-dodgers, political radicals, and opportunists of all kinds—and therein lies the ring of truth. Much of *The Issei* reflects Ichioka's previously published research on Issei prostitutes, laborers, and the political Left in the *Amerasia Journal*. This study ends in 1924, when Congress enacted the first permanent quota based on national origins for all immigrants—and a zero quota for Japanese. With few exceptions, there would be no new arrivals from Japan after 1924, and conditions

would worsen for both the Issei and their American-born children, the Nisei. Those episodes also need to be viewed from a bilingual and bicultural perspective, and we look forward to an equally well-researched and pungently written sequel.

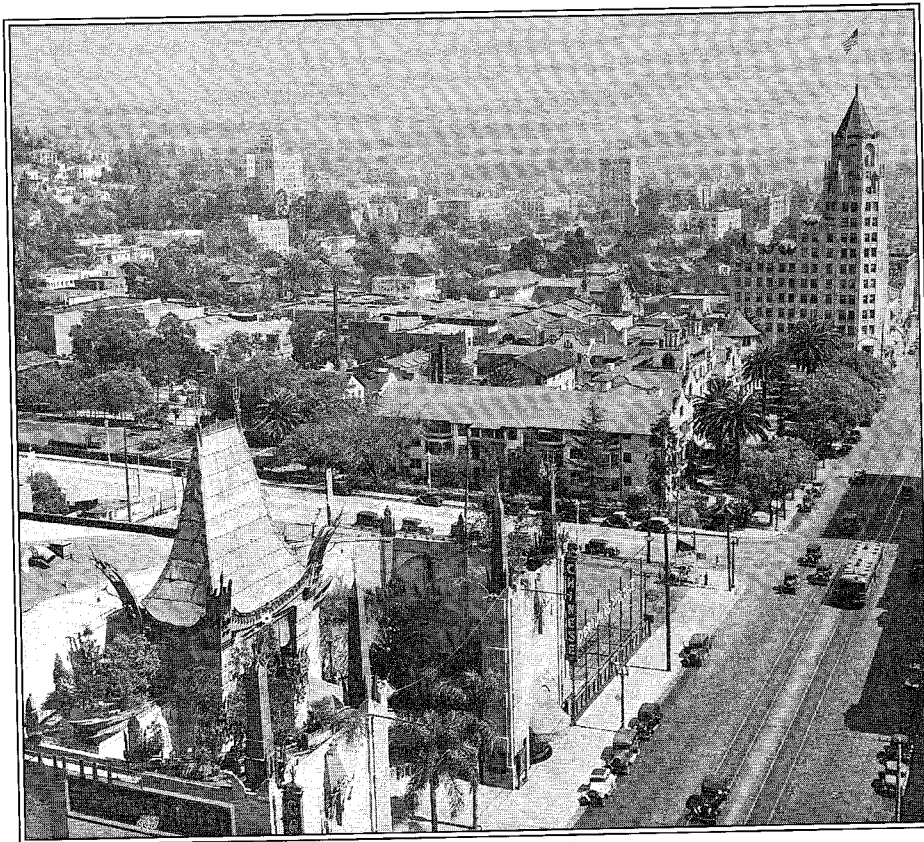
Any basic collection of books on the history of California and the American West will be incomplete without these two complementary narrative histories about the two groups who pioneered immigration from across the Pacific. Both books reflect their authors' command of the diversity of published and archival sources on their subjects. Roger Daniels confirms his stature as perhaps the most enduring historiographer of the Asian experience in America by attempting to place the political and socio-economic evolution of Chinese and Japanese in the American West into the broad conventional patterns used to describe immigrants from Europe: “To synthesize the history of Chinese and Japanese in this country and to treat their lives as integral to the American mosaic . . . is essential to a clear perspective not only upon the ongoing, ever-widening Asian American immigrant experience but on the immigrant experience in general.” (p. xiii) With his integration of Japanese language documents and archival materials, Ichioka asserts a new standard for Japanese American (Nikkei) ethnic history, a field that is notoriously reliant on English language sources, and therefore limited in objectivity and empathy. Both authors employ copious and convincing documentation to revise several longstanding assumptions about the historical roles of the Chinese and Japanese in America. CHS

### *Los Angeles County Historical Directory.*

By Janet I. Atkinson. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1988, xii, 207 pp., \$24.95 cloth.)

*Reviewed by* Judson Grenier, *Professor of History at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and co-editor of A Guide to Historic Places in Los Angeles County.*

This work is a compendium of facts akin to the World Almanac or the telephone directory and is a guidebook to boot. Its pages are crammed with data about every subject



Atkinson's *Los Angeles County Historical Directory* lists 21 sites along Hollywood Boulevard, including Mann's (formerly Grauman's) Chinese Theatre (lower left), which opened in 1927, shortly before this photograph was taken. Courtesy Security Pacific National Bank.

in Los Angeles County that could be remotely considered historical.

For Janet Atkinson, a Simi Valley teacher and producer, it was a long-time labor of love. Such effort was justified, she believes, because few books exist that provide access to significant historical landmarks. She does give credit to Gebhard and Winter's *Guide to Architecture* and to my own guide, but comments, rightly, that they are hard to find in local bookstores.

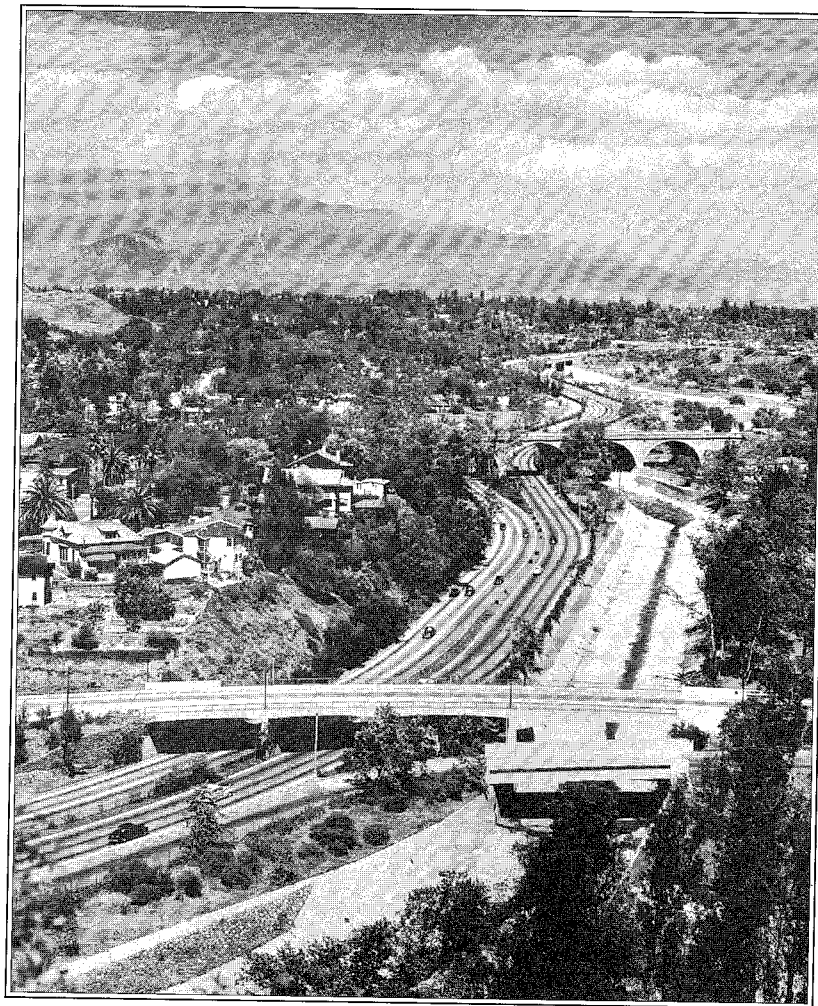
Atkinson recognizes the pitfalls of putting together a historical

directory: "In the field of history and preservation longevity is the exception, change typical. One year the city runs an historic site, the next year they turn it over to a private group, or vice versa. It is hard to keep up." Quite so. A guidebook of any kind is obsolete almost at the moment of publication.

The book surveys more than 100 communities. Rather than emphasize well-known historic sites, she concentrates on the smaller towns "in order to enhance their resources." Hundreds of people contributed information. Her modus operandi was first to contact a local chamber of commerce,



Arroyo Seco Freeway, Los Angeles, in the 1940s. After World War II, suburban growth led to the development of elaborate, multi-lane road systems. Los Angeles, with its many small communities, was crisscrossed by freeways. As population increased, the roads were extended. CHS Library, San Francisco.



then historical societies, homeowners' organizations, libraries, and individuals. All provided grist for her mill.

The data on each community includes its history, books about it, local historians (phone numbers included), historical societies, museums, historical landmarks, restaurants, businesses, schools, churches, theaters, parks, special events, realtors, "oldtimers," artists, craftsmen, chambers of commerce, etc. Classifications vary. Los Angeles city, divided geographically, receives the largest number of citations (32 pages).

This book is tremendously useful for visitors to southern California and nothing should qualify my strong recommendation to buy it. However, I do have a few minor reservations:

The site selection is highly eclectic (trees, mountains, signs, people). I see no purpose in listing items long gone (nothing of the original remaining to make it worth the trip), such as an Agoura ranchhouse, Mt. Lowe hotels, a Beverly Hills eucalyptus, a Hollenbeck Park bridge, a Hollywood drugstore. And some of those that do exist seem strange. I can understand

how the Spruce Goose airship makes the book, but why the oil-drilling islands offshore from Long Beach? Why list a contemporary restaurant simply "because its theme is historic?"

Some of the items appear promotional (her respondents had a stake in having their places listed). Some of the material seems quoted from handouts (e.g., see Beverly Hills). The presentation is inconsistent; for example, in Boyle Heights we encounter homes, private homes, Victorian homes, residences and cottages; in Encino homes are listed with and without street addresses.

The community selection also might raise a few eyebrows. Why include La Habra and Los Alamitos from Orange County and leave out such municipalities as Compton, Lawndale, or Hermosa Beach? Why mention Manzanar in the Owens Valley?

Any encyclopedic work will contain a few typos and factual errors; this is no exception.

An appendix lists Historic Realtors (basis for inclusion unclear), Historic Districts, and three sections that go beyond Los Angeles to include five other counties—Historic Restaurants,

Bed and Breakfast Inns, "Weddings, Receptions, Christmas"—and concludes with her own company's address.

The major obstacles to this book's success are those that plagued its predecessors: 1) Times change rapidly and the information becomes dated; e.g., a Hope Street church is demolished; no longer is the Renaissance Fair in Agoura nor is Art Reeves with the Dominguez Water Company. 2) It probably will be difficult to obtain at the local bookstore; the key is professional marketing. But the product itself—vast in scope and a model sourcebook for local history—is worth the effort.

CHS

## *Keepers of our Past: Local Historical Writing in the United States, 1820s-1930s.*

By David J. Russo. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988, 312 pp., \$39.95.)

*Reviewed by Gregg M. Campbell, Professor of History, California State University, Sacramento, who recently served as Chair of the Sacramento Sesquicentennial Committee.*

In content, David J. Russo's *Keepers of our Past* might seem to be of only passing interest to Californians. A native of Deerfield, Massachusetts, and a professor of history at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Russo's inquiry is focused on the eastern and northern sections of the United States. Chapter 2, for example, is entitled "The New England Pioneers." Moreover, in defending the amateurs and the antiquarians, Russo launches a somewhat crabbed attack on academic historians:

Academic scholarship has been largely misdirected, yet another indication of the distorting power of nationalism in this century. . . . In one fundamental aspect, the amateurs, with a passionate concern to recover *their* past in the context of their community, have been the better historians. (p. 4)

Yet, Russo's premise that amateur local historians were important pioneers is supported by the fact that "history as written in the United States, until recently, was written mostly by amateurs and typically was local (or at least subnational) in its range and coverage." (p. 3)

Russo's spirited defense of the antiquarians echoes sentiments advanced at the dawn of the twentieth century by Josiah Royce. In his essay entitled "Provincialism," first given as a Phi Beta Kappa address at Iowa State University in 1902 and published in *Race Questions and Other American Problems* in 1908, Royce stated:

My thesis is that, in the present state of the world's civilization, and of life in our own country, the time has come to emphasize, with a new meaning and intensity, the positive value, the absolute necessity for our welfare, of a wholesome provincialism, as a saving power . . .

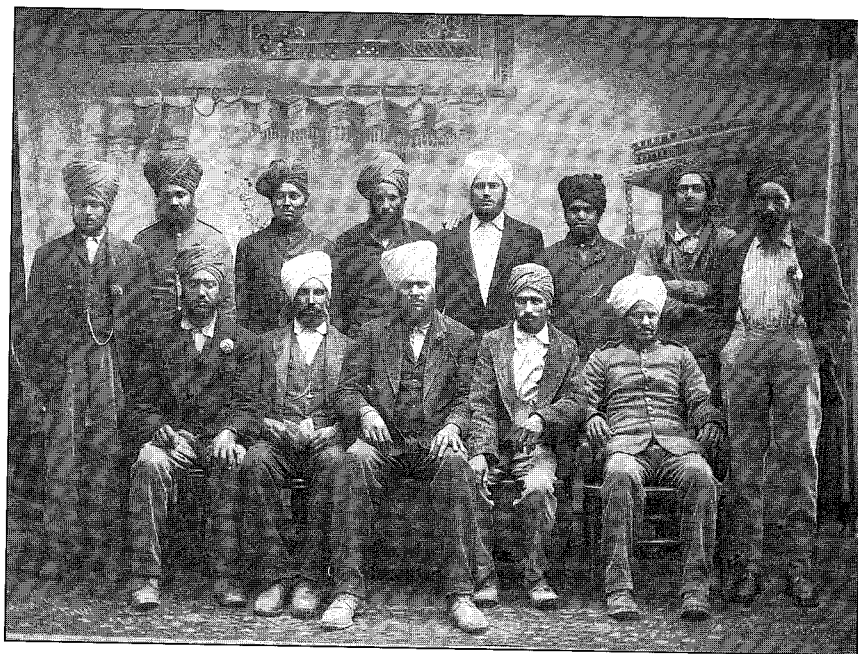
Royce believed a wholesome provincialism would be a powerful antidote "to counteract the leveling tendencies of modern civilization." "Keep the province awake," he exhorted, "that the nation may be saved from the disastrous hypnotic slumber so characteristic of excited masses of mankind." Russo's defense of local historians is of interest for the way in which he echoes Royce's views on the primacy of the province and the role of amateur local historians in nurturing a spirit of local and regional pride.

As academic revisionists of the 1970s sought to counter the traditional Anglo male narrative of American national virtue by writing history from "the bottom up," so we can think of amateur local historians as writing history from "the inside out." While many amateur local historians were male members of respected families reflecting traditional values, they also enjoyed the unique role of having been in a sense present at the creation of their communities. Whatever their failings of bias, limited horizons, or amateur sensibilities, these first recorders of the local and regional saga do perform an important function in our understanding of ourselves and our communities.

In California the primacy of local history is being recognized on a number of fronts. A revised state education code calls for the study of local history from original sources in the primary grades. In fostering regional solutions to local problems, such groups as Bay Vision 2020, Los Angeles 2000, and the Sacramento Tomorrow Coalition rely on an historic understanding of the origins of local issues. And further afield, environmentalists with their concept of bio-regional development find local and regional histories useful to their endeavors.

David Russo's *Keepers Of Our Past* advances an argument of interest to Californians, not so much in its content, which is





A gathering of  
northern  
California Sikhs,  
ca. 1910. Courtesy  
California State  
Library.

largely focused on the mid-Atlantic and New England states, but in its theme, which recognizes the contributions of local historians to understand our past.

CHS

### *The Sikhs of Northern California, 1904-1975.*

By Bruce La Brack. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1988, xviii, 489 pp., \$67.50 cloth.)

*Reviewed by H. Brett Melendy, Professor of History, San Jose State University, and author of Asians in America.*

La Brack's comprehensive sociological study of the Sikhs in California is part of the publisher's series on immigrant communities and ethnic minorities in the United States and Canada. This book focuses upon the Sikhs of the Stockton and Marysville-Yuba City areas, but some attention is paid to the Sikhs of the Imperial Valley.

The history of the Sikhs' migration follows in general the immigration restraints placed upon these people by the United States. The author examines in considerable detail the reasons for the migration of South Asians to overseas destinations. He also describes the culture of the people of the subcontinent. The Sikhs came from the province of Punjab, which India and Pakistan divided at the time of independence in 1947. Sikhs began arriving in North America in 1904. This first period of immigration continued until 1923.

La Brack reports on the Ghadar Party and its championing

of Indian nationalism during World War I. He also traces the activities of the small number of Sikhs who first worked in California agriculture. Following Congressional exclusion of South Asians in 1917, Sikhs had to enter the United States illegally. This immigration phase continued until 1946. The author describes the development of families during the '20s and '30s as Sikhs married Mexican women, and he recounts the adjustment problems presented by these marriages.

After 1946, legal immigration was once again possible, and La Brack describes the regeneration of the Sikh society over the next thirty years. He shows how new immigrants led in restoring the Sikh culture, particularly in the Marysville-Yuba City area. He also traces the agricultural activities of the Sikhs, particularly in the growing of peaches. Passage of the 1965 immigration law greatly accelerated the number of Sikhs entering the United States. Even so, the total number in California remains relatively small. La Brack reports that of the 100,000 in the United States in 1975, about 90,000 were concentrated in Sutter and Yuba Counties. In a follow-up chapter covering the years 1975 (when he completed his field work) to 1986, La Brack reports a growing dispersion of the Sikhs in California and shows that they, as were other small farmers, were encountering difficulties in maintaining their farms. As well as reporting on the Sikh culture in California, he talks of the problems resulting from independence in India.

This study is the result of extensive interviews in the Marysville-Yuba City area by the author, who also spent some time in India. The book is peppered with thirty statistical tables that serve to reinforce his findings. As noted at the

outset, this well-researched study is largely sociological. But the Sikhs and their culture are described largely in abstract terms. As a historian, I would have wished to see the Sikhs portrayed more humanistically. CHS

## *The Port Chicago Mutiny: The Story of the Largest Mass Mutiny Trial in U.S. Navy History.*

By Robert L. Allen. (New York: Warner Books, 1989, xxi, 192 pp., \$19.95.)

Reviewed by Charles Wollenberg, *Vista Community College* and author of *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History*.

When author Robert Allen was a young man in the 1960s, he demonstrated against the Vietnam War and resisted induction into the armed forces. In later years, as editor of *The Black Scholar* magazine and in other scholarly and activist guises, Allen continued to protest against what he believed to be American racism and militarism. Given this background, it is no surprise that Allen was attracted to the story of the Port Chicago "mutiny" of 1944.

The incident occurred shortly after America's largest domestic disaster of World War II, a massive explosion on the evening of June 17, 1944, at the Port Chicago naval depot on Suisun Bay, about 35 miles northeast of San Francisco. The blast completely destroyed two Liberty Ships, onto which ammunition was being loaded, and severely damaged the surrounding military base. Of the 320 men killed, 202 were black sailors employed as ammunition loaders. During the war, the Navy usually assigned African Americans to ship duty only as messmen and stewards ("chambermaids for the braid," they were called). Most of the Navy's black recruits and draftees, like the Port Chicago ammunition loaders, served as shoreside laborers in segregated units commanded by white officers. The Navy was by no means unique in this regard; the Army, Air Corps, and Marines were also segregated during the war.

Three weeks after the Port Chicago explosion, about 300 surviving black sailors were ordered to begin loading ammunition again. Almost all refused, and eventually 50 of the men

were convicted of mutiny and sentenced to between 8 and 15 years of hard labor. The incident became a *cause célèbre* for civil rights groups, black newspapers, and others opposed to military segregation. As a result of a concerted public relations and lobbying campaign, the government set aside the sentences and returned the men to active duty in January 1946. A month later the Navy officially ended its segregation policy, and during the succeeding summer the Port Chicago "mutineers" were allowed to leave the service with honorable discharges.

Allen effectively fleshes out this important story, relying in part on the trial transcript and on various official reports and correspondence that had remained classified until 1972. His most valuable sources are oral histories given by some of the convicted sailors, particularly the alleged "ringleader" Joseph Small. Allen not only publishes much of Small's interview, but also includes substantial portions of a manuscript the former sailor prepared. The result is to make Joseph Small a virtual co-author, and, in truth, his prose is sometimes livelier than Allen's.

The book is weakest when Allen attempts to apply sociological theories of group behavior to the Port Chicago case. But the author does a good job of putting the incident into a broad context of wartime social and racial change in America. He also argues persuasively that racist attitudes affected the court martial proceedings, including the actions of prosecutor J. Frank Coakley, who, as Alameda County District Attorney during the 1960s, also prosecuted hundreds of Berkeley protestors. Most important, Allen (and Small) provide solid and sometimes moving evidence to support the book's central contention that the incident was not a mutiny but a valid protest, caused by understandable fear and trauma and by a justifiable reaction to inadequate training, dangerous working conditions, bigoted and incompetent officers, and the underlying policy of segregation. Referring to the dangerous job of ammunition loading, one convicted sailor asked, "Why don't they get some whiteys and put them down there?"

Today, even in the Bay Area, Port Chicago is all but forgotten. In 1968 the Navy purchased and demolished the civilian town of that name, and the military base is now called the Concord Naval Weapons Depot, a storage and transfer facility for both conventional and nuclear devices. But the base can still be a place of conflict and controversy. In 1987 Robert Allen was one of many demonstrators who were arrested there





During the Depression, apricot orchards like this one drew thousands of hopeful migrant families to low-paid seasonal work in the Santa Clara and San Joaquin valleys. CHS Library, San Francisco.

while protesting U.S. policies in Central America. The prisoners were temporarily detained in the same wooden trailers that the Navy had used to transport the black ammunition loaders to the docks during World War II. On the day of his arrest, Allen wore a T-shirt decorated with the slogan "Remember Port Chicago." In his book, Allen has succeeded admirably in preserving the memory of the place, and in defending the reputations of 50 sailors who had the courage to stand up for their rights 45 years ago. CHS

### *The Harvest Gypsies: On the Road to The Grapes of Wrath.*

By John Steinbeck. Introduction by Charles Wollenberg. (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1988, 80 pp., photos, \$7.95 paper.)

Reviewed by James N. Gregory, Associate Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley.

Two and one-half years before the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck wrote a series of articles for the *San Francisco News* that signaled his mounting concern for the plight of the Dust Bowl migrants. California was just beginning to learn about the families arriving in large numbers from

Oklahoma and the surrounding southern plains states, and Steinbeck's report helped bring to public attention the serious challenges that greeted these newcomers in the state's Central Valley. Photographer Dorothea Lange was also busy during 1936 and 1937. Her empathetic shots of migrant families suffering the indignities of farm labor and the wretched conditions of squatter camp life brought more attention and concern. Now, fifty years later, Charles Wollenberg has brought author and photographer together in a new edition of Steinbeck's 1936 articles illustrated with Lange's remarkable photographs. The seven articles in this slim volume tell a story that is instantly recognizable to anyone familiar with the novel that followed. In terms every bit as stark as *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck builds a portrait of misfortune, suffering, and oppression. In place of the fictitious Joads, nameless real families face brutal conditions in agricultural California, living in miserable squatter camps, where children died of malnutrition and families fell into helpless despair.

Steinbeck was very sure about the source of this tragedy. Blame went to the system of large-scale agriculture and the corporate growers who controlled it. Carefully exempting small farmers, he indicted agribusiness for luring the migrants to California, keeping them in conditions of near starvation, and ruthlessly repressing all attempts at labor organization. The good guys in this scenario are equally apparent. As in the novel, Steinbeck found hope for the migrants first in the migrant labor camps established by the Farm Security Administration, and second in the promise of unionization.

As a guide to the actual experience of the Dust Bowl migrants, *The Harvest Gypsies*, like *The Grapes of Wrath*, leaves much to be desired. It overlooks the majority of newcomers who suffered nothing like the destitution of the squatter encampments. It also oversimplifies the social and economic context. The travail of farm workers was not simply the result of the scale of farm ownership; small family farms could also exploit. Nor were Steinbeck's solutions very useful. Like most liberals in the late 1930s, Steinbeck put his faith in unions, in the federal government, and in an ethos of cooperation. The Okies had little use for any of these. Their progress out of poverty and out of agriculture would depend primarily on the tremendous expansion of economic opportunity afforded by World War II and subsequent decades.

But *The Harvest Gypsies* is a marvelous document of its time, important both to those interested in Steinbeck's personal

development and the background to his classic novel, and for anyone interested in the political passions surrounding the Dust Bowl migration. Steinbeck was a reformer, not a social historian. His articles reveal much about the sympathies that radicals and New Dealers registered for the disadvantaged, and especially for the rural poor. They suggest as well the angry contest between liberals and agricultural interests that became one of the cornerstones of California politics in the 1930s.

Charles Wollenberg's otherwise excellent introduction might have done more to establish this context. Wollenberg provides a careful overview of the migrants' experience in Depression-era California and much interesting detail about Steinbeck's research and writing. He corrects some of the novelist's assertions by showing, for example, the error and ethnocentrism in Steinbeck's assumption that the influx of "white labor" would make unionization possible, since whites would "insist on a standard of living much higher than that which was accorded the foreign 'cheap labor.'" More of this would have been useful. One other small concern: these articles were reprinted once before, in a 1938 pamphlet entitled *Their Blood is Strong*, and Steinbeck then wrote a concluding essay that for some reason was not included in the present volume. Still, we are lucky to have the original series back in print. By resurrecting these fascinating essays, Wollenberg has given new life to an important artifact of California history. CHS

## *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities.*

By Brian I. Godfrey. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, xvii, 233 pp.)

Reviewed by Fred W. Viehe, Assistant Professor of History at Youngstown State University and author of articles on Los Angeles and its environs.

*Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* is a major contribution to our understanding of community history in a major city. In this work, Brian I. Godfrey presents a new model of neighbor-

hood development, illustrating that ethnic and nonconformist communities change in similar, but also different, ways.

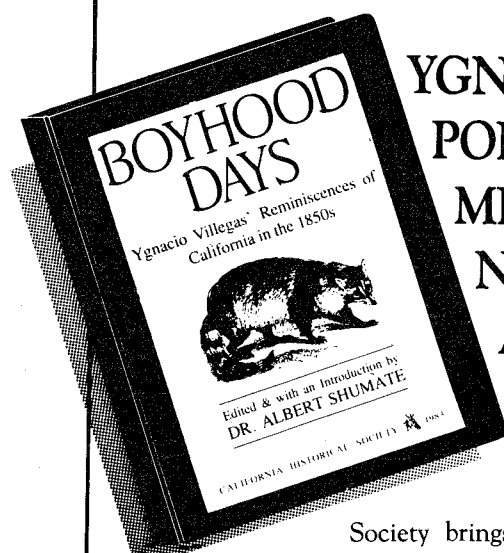
Godfrey focuses on two San Francisco communities, the Mission district and the Haight-Ashbury district. The former is an Hispanic neighborhood, while the latter is well-known as a counter-cultural center. Since both ethnic and nonconformist subcultures have a cultural detachment from mainstream American society, they cluster in the city rather than assimilate into it. At the same time, there are distinct differences between these two communities, perhaps best summarized by the comment, "Hispanics are not a counter-culture; we are trying to preserve our culture, not change it." (p. 216) In the Mission district, the 1930s and 1940s represented the period of Hispanic penetration; the 1950s, the period of ethnic invasion; and the 1960s, the era of consolidation. In contrast, Haight-Ashbury experienced a bohemian influx during the 1960s, a middle-class transition during the following decade, and gentrification most recently. As can be readily seen, the Hispanic community in the Mission district remains, while Haight-Ashbury has been transformed.

While *Neighborhoods in Transition* is a geographical work, it contains a significant message for students of urban and community history. Godfrey reinforces the view that the strength of ethnic communities lies in the refusal of their residents to adopt American values. In contrast, Haight-Ashbury failed to survive as a counter-cultural mecca because in reality it represented values more aligned with American culture than antithetical to it. That explains why the Mission district continues as an Hispanic community, while the Haight-Ashbury undergoes gentrification.

Besides his focus on the Mission and Haight-Ashbury districts, Godfrey also presents a brief history of greater San Francisco. The section that is particularly enlightening deals with the period since World War II. In this section, there is an excellent overview of the San Francisco experience from the viewpoint of Japanese Americans, blacks, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Hispanics, and smaller Asian and Pacific groups, as well as Beats, hippies, and gays. From this overview, the reader receives an excellent impression of San Francisco's diversity.

*Neighborhoods in Transition* is required reading for all those interested in urban, community, and California history. It also will be enjoyed by San Franciscans who seek a deeper understanding of their city. CHS





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Blumberg, Rhoda. *The Great American Gold Rush*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1989. \$16.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-02-711681-6. Order from: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.; Front & Brown Streets; Riverside, NJ 08370.

Boutelle, Sara Holmes. *Julia Morgan, Architect*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1988. \$55.00 (cloth) ISBN 0-89659-792-X. Order from: Abbeville Press; Subs. of Artabras Books; 488 Madison Ave.; New York, NY 10022.

Bradley, Bill. *The Last of the Great Stations: 50 Years of the Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal*. Revised edition. Interurbans Special 72. Glendale: Interurban Press, 1989. \$25.00 (paper) ISBN 0-916374-84-X. Order from: Interurban Press; Post Office Box 6444; Glendale, CA 91205.

Chinn, Thomas W. *Bridging the Pacific: San Francisco Chinatown and Its People*. San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1989. Edited by Rebecca Pepper and Sean Cotter. \$34.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-9614198-3-0, \$19.95 (paper)

ISBN 0-9614198-4-9. Order from: Chinese Historical Society of America; 17 Alder Place; San Francisco, CA 94133.

Cleland, Robert G. *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills: Southern California, 1850-1880*. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1989. \$24.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-87328-006-7, \$12.95 (paper) ISBN 0-87328-097-0. Order from: Huntington Library Publications; 1151 Oxford Road; San Marino, CA 91108.

Estudillo, Jesus Maria. *The Journal of Jesus Maria Estudillo: Sketches of California in the 1860's*. Edited and annotated by Margaret Schlichtmann. Fredericksburg, Tex.: Awani Press, 1988. \$10.00 (paper) ISBN 0-915266-18-0. Order from: Awani Press; Post Office Box 881; Fredericksburg, TX 78624.

*Fifteen Seconds: The Great California Earthquake of 1989*. San Francisco: Tides Foundation; Covelo: Island Press, 1989. \$19.95 (paper) ISBN 1-55963-038-8. Order from: The Tides Foundation; 15 Seconds Project; 1388 Sutter Street, 10th Floor; San Francisco, CA 94109.

Gottlieb, Robert. *A Life of its Own: The Politics of Water and Power*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988. \$20.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-15-195190-X. Order from: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 1250 Sixth Ave.; San Diego, CA 92101.

Hamlin, Rick. *Tournament of Roses: A One Hundred Year Celebration*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988. \$34.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-07-025794-9. Order from: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.; 8171 Redwood Highway; Novato, CA 94947.

Jacoby, Harold. *Pacific: Yesterday and the Day Before That*. Grass Valley: Comstock Bonanza Press, 1989. \$15.00 (paper) ISBN 0-933994-09-5. Order from: Comstock Bonanza Press; 18919 William Quirk Memorial Drive; Grass Valley, CA 95945.



- Lowell, Waverly, ed. *Architecture Records in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland, 1988. \$45.00 (cloth) ISBN 0-8240-6614-6. Order from: Garland Publishing Inc.; 136 Madison Ave.; New York, NY 10016.
- Neelands, Barbara. "Reason P. Tucker, the Quiet Pioneer." *Gleanings*, Vol. 4, no.2. Napa: Napa County Historical Society, 1989. \$1.89 (paper) plus .91 tax and postage. Order from: Napa County Historical Society; 1219 First Street; Napa, CA 94558.
- O'Hare, Carol. *A Bicyclist's Guide to Bay Area History*. Sunnyvale: Fair Oaks Publishing Company, 1989. Rev. ed. \$8.95 (paper) ISBN 0-933271-03-4. Order from: Fair Oaks Publishing Company; 941 Populas Place; Sunnyvale, CA 94086.
- Osterbrock, Donald E., et al. *Eye on the Sky: Lick Observatory's First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. \$25.00 (cloth) ISBN 0-520-06109-8. Order from: University of California Press; 2120 Berkeley Way; Berkeley, CA 94720.
- Pattiani, Evelyn Craig. *Index to Queen of the Hills: The Story of Piedmont: A California City*. Piedmont: Piedmont Historical Society, 1989. \$2.00 (paper).
- Rawls, James J. *New Directions in California History: A book of Readings*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988. \$14.95 (paper) ISBN 0-07-051253-1 Order from: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.; 8171 Redwood Highway; Novato, CA 94947.
- Robinson, John W. *The San Bernadinos: The Mountain Country from Cajon Pass to Oak Glen; Two Centuries of Changing Use*. Arcadia: The Big Santa Anita Historical Society, 1989. \$30.00. Order from: The Big Santa Anita Historical Society; 7 North Fifth Avenue; Arcadia, CA 91006.
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- Starr, Kevin. *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. \$24.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-19-504487-8. Order from: Oxford University Press, Inc.; 16-00 Pollitt Dr.; Fair Lawn, NJ 07410.
- Vigil, James Diego. *Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988. \$22.50 (cloth) ISBN 0-292-77613-6, \$8.95 (paper) ISBN 0-292-71119-0. Order from: University of Texas Press; Post Office Box 7819; Austin, TX 78713-7819.
- Weber, Dickinson. *Early Tall Buildings from the Agricultural Valley Towns of Central and Northern California: A Sentimental Sketchbook Collection of Downtown Street Views of Main Street California, U.S.A.* Concord: Sandscape Press, 1988. \$15.00 (paper) ISBN 0-936721-0104. Order from: Sandscape Press; 1647 Willow Pass Road, Suite 300; Concord, CA 94520.
- Young, Stanley. *The Missions of California*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988. \$14.95 (paper) ISBN 0-87701-540-6. Order from: Chronicle Books; 275 Fifth Street; San Francisco, CA 94103.

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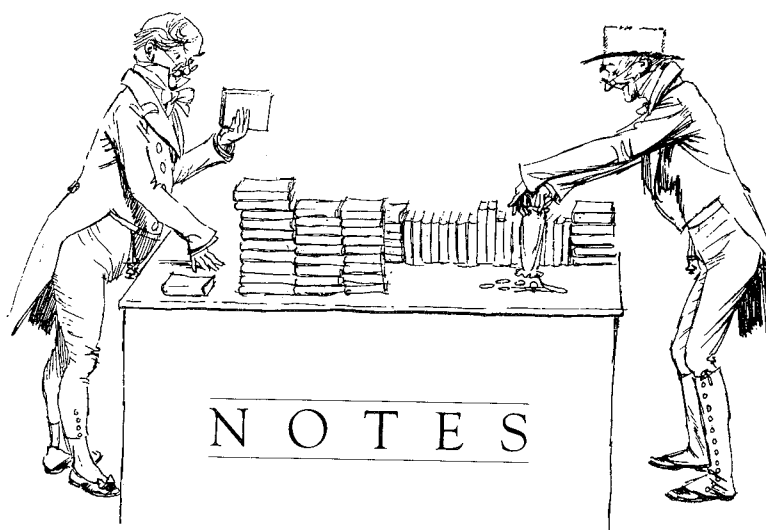
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HURTADO, "California Indians,"  
pp. 2-11.

1. The most comprehensive overview of the image of the American Indian is Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978). See also Ray A. Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 105-128; Raymond William Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982); Glenda Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 1-81.
2. David Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge': A Prime Index of Savagism," *Ethnohistory* 29 (1982):281-306; Robert A. Trennert, "Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920," *Western Historical Quarterly* 13 (July 1982): 271-90.
3. The most comprehensive study of Indian policy and reform is Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 2:609-86. On Indian farming see R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America, Prehistory to the Present* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987).
4. Schurz, quoted in Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Americanizing the American Indians:*

*Writings of the "Friends of the Indian," 1880-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 25.

5. Schurz, quoted in *ibid.*, 25.
6. Leupp, quoted in Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 168.
7. Sherburne F. Cook judged mission Indian labor to be a failure and cited cases of Indian resistance; Cook, "The Indian versus the Spanish Mission," *Ibero-Americana* 21 (1943):91:101. Nevertheless, relying exclusively on Indian workers, the missions became the paramount economic institution of the province. See Robert Archibald, "The Economy of the Alta California Mission, 1803-1821," *Southern California Quarterly* 58 (Summer 1976):227-40, and *The Economic Aspects of the California Missions* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1978). For descriptions of Indian cultures before the advent of the missions see Robert F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 8, *California* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978).
8. Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 32-54; Elinore Lawrence, "Horse thieves on the Spanish Trail," *Touring Topics* 23 (January 1931): 22-25, 55; Sylvia Broadbent, "Conflict at Monterey: Indian Horse Raiding, 1820-1850," *Journal of California Anthropology* 1 (1974):86-101; Thomas N. Layton, "Traders and Raiders: Aspects of the Trans-Basin and California-Plateau Commerce, 1800-1830," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 3 (Summer 1981):127-36. A good description of Indian raiding and the San Joaquin horse herds is in William Robert Garner, *Letters from California, 1846-1847*, ed. Donald Munro Craig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 104.
9. The best description of southern California developments is George Harwood Phillips, *Chiefs and Challengers: Indian Resistance and Cooperation in Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).
10. John A. Sutter, "Reminiscences of General John Augustus Sutter," MS, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.
11. Sutter to Pierson B. Reading, May 11, 1845, Reading Collection, California Room, State Library, Sacramento.
12. Albert L. Hurtado, "'Saved So Much as Possible for Labour': Indian Population and the New Helvetia Work Force," *American Culture and Research Journal* 6, no. 4 (1982):63-78.
13. Sutter, "Reminiscences," Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, trans., ed., *A Pioneer at Sutter's Fort, 1846-1850: The Adventures of Heinrich Lienhard* (Los Angeles: The Calafia Society, 1942), 7, 68; Sutter to John Marsh, October 7, 1840, Marsh Collection, California Room, State Library, Sacramento; and Sutter, et al., *New Helvetia Diary: A Record Kept by John A. Sutter and His Clerks at New Helvetia, California, from September 9, 1845, to May 25, 1848* (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1939).
14. The shield was permeable. See Sutter to José de Jesus Vallejo, October 15, 1840,

- Sutter Collection, California Room, State Library, Sacramento.
15. James Peter Zollinger, *Sutter: The Man and His Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 104-105.
16. There are no reliable censuses of Indians in California before the Mexican War. Anglo settler John Marsh offered his estimate of ten thousand "civilized or rather domesticated" Indians in an 1845 letter to Lewis Cass, "Letter of Dr. John Marsh to Hon. Lewis Cass," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 22 (December 1943):315-22. Nineteenth-century historian Hubert Howe Bancroft estimated that there were about three or four thousand ex-neophytes living in the towns and on ranchos, plus about double that number of former mission inmates living among the independent tribes. Bancroft, *History of California*, 7 vols. (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886-1890), 6:3. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the bulk of these worked at least part time for non-Indians. And some Indians who had never been in the missions worked for whites like Sutter in the interior. It should be added, however, that estimating the Indian population of nineteenth-century California is risky. See Hurtado, "California Indian Demography, Sherburne F. Cook, and the Revision of American History," *Pacific Historical Review* 58 (Aug. 1989): 323-43.
17. Sherburne F. Cook, "The Physical and Demographic Reaction of the Nonmission Indians in Colonial and Provincial California," *Ibero-Americana* 22 (1943):1-53. An Indian account of such an attack is in Hans Jørgen Uldall and William Shipley, comps., *Nisenan Texts and Dictionary*, University of California Publications in Linguistics, vol. 46 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 69. See also, Hurtado, "Saved so Much as Possible for Labour," 63-78.
18. For examples see James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 42, 262-64; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1975), 146-70; R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 117-42; Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1870* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 157-58, 166, 168, 191, 197-201.
19. The best source on the recruitment and payment of Indian soldiers is the Fort Sutter Papers, the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. See also John Adam Hussey and George Walcott Ames, Jr., "California Preparations to Meet the Walla Walla Invasion, 1846," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 21 (March 1942): 9-21; Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California* (1848; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 359-60; Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence, *Expeditions of John Charles Frémont*, 3 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970-1973), 2:235, 302; Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 77-85.
20. Bancroft, *California*, 6:3; Sherburne F. Cook, *The Population of the California Indians, 1769-1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 44.
21. Cook, *Population of the California Indians*, 59, 65; Rodman W. Paul, *California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 23-24.
22. Richard Barnes Mason describes Indian miners in Mason to Brig. Gen. R. Jones, August 17, 1848, in *Message from the President . . . to the Two Houses of Congress . . .*, Sen. Ex. Doc. 1, 30th Cong., 2nd sess., ser. 537, 56-64. See also James Rawls, "Gold Diggers: Indian Miners in the California Gold Rush," *California Historical Quarterly* 55 (1976):28-45; Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 100-124.
23. Edwin A. Beilharz and Carlos U. López, trans. and ed., *We Were 49ers! Chilean Accounts of the California Gold Rush* (Pasadena: Ward Ritchie Press, 1976), 52. For examples of the variety of Indian experience in the mines see Lyman L. Palmer, *History of Napa and Lake Counties, California* (San Francisco: Slocum, Bowen, 1881), 58-62; L. D. V. Haler to G. W. Patten, September 20, 1852. Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, Dept. of the Pacific, Letters Received, RG 393, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
24. Rawls, "Gold Diggers," 34-37.
25. John Carr, *Pioneer Days in California* (Eureka, Calif.: n.p., 1891), 104.
26. James Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 126-32, 171-86; Robert F. Heizer, ed., *The Destruction of the California Indians* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Peregrine Press, 1974); Robert F. Heizer, ed. *They Were Only Diggers: A Collection of Articles from California Newspapers, 1851-1866, on Indian and White Relations* (Ramaona, Calif.: Ballena Press, 1974), 23-57; Robert F. Heizer and Alan F. Almquist, *The Other Californians: Prejudice and Discrimination under Spain, Mexico, and the United States to 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 23-48; Lynwood Carranco and Estle Beard, *Genocide and Vendetta: The Round Valley Wars of Northern California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 84-156;
27. An excellent description of Indian conditions in Nevada County is found in W. P. Crenshaw to Thomas J. Henley, December 16, 1854, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, GR 75, National Archives Microfilm M234, reel 34 (hereinafter M234: reel number).
28. Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 175-80. For documentary accounts see Heizer, ed., *Destruction of California Indians*, 271-84.
29. Gae Whitney Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 6-9; W. P. Crenshaw to Thomas J. Henley, December 16, 1854, M234:34; Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 174.
30. "Cruelty to Squaws," *Daily Alta California*, January 17, 1858, 1; Heizer, ed., *Destruction of the California Indians*, 278.
31. Heizer, ed., *They Were Only Diggers*, 29, 34-35.
32. Sherburne F. Cook, "The Indian Versus the California Mission," *Ibero-Americana* 21 (1943):28-29; Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 180-92.
33. *Statutes of California*, 1850, chapter 133; Old Bill File, California State Archives, Sacramento; *California State Senate Journal*, 1850, 217, 224, 228-29, 257, 337-38, 343, 369, 384-87.
34. Heizer, ed., *They Were Only Diggers*, 1. See also Heizer, ed., *Destruction of the California Indians*, 226-41.



35. George Harwood Phillips, "Indians in Los Angeles, 1781-1875: Economic Integration, Social Disintegration," *Pacific Historical Review* 69 (1980):427-51.
  36. See, for example, John Sutter to Thomas Henley, February 9, 1856, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1880, RG 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, reel 35.
  37. Irvin Ayres, "Biographical Sketches," Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.
  38. Thoughtful agriculturalists urged California farmers to mechanize as rapidly as possible. *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences* 1 (June 15, 1854):189.
  39. Paul Wallace Gates, ed., *California Ranchos and Farms, 1846-1862* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 42-44; Leo Rogin, *The Introduction of Farm Machinery in Its Relationship to the Productivity of Labor in the United States during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1931), 125-53.
  40. Fannie Reading to her mother, July 8, 1864, Reading Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California; and Reading Ranch Journal, 1854, Reading Collection, California Room, State Library, Sacramento, California.
  41. J. Ross Browne to Luke Lea, April 2, 1857; T. J. Henley to Charles E. Mix. November 19, 1858, both in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881, Record Group 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, reels 34 and 36 respectively; and Henley to G. W. Manypenny, September 4, 1856, in *Annual Report, Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1856, Sen. Ex. Doc. 1, 34th Cong., 2d sess., ser. #875, 789.
  42. Sutter to Henley, February 9, 1856, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1880, RG 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, reel 35.
  43. Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 149-53.
  44. A. B. Greenwood to John A. Dreibelbis, July 30, 1860, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1860, Sen. Ex. Doc. 1, 36th Cong., 2d sess., ser. 1078, 455-56.
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  48. Albert L. Hurtado, "'Hardly a Farm House—a Kitchen without Them': Indian and White Households on the California Borderland Frontier," *Western Historical Quarterly* 13 (July 1982):245-70.
- PETERSON, "Thomas Starr King," pp. 12-21.
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  4. *Alta California*, March 5, 1864; Parker's observation is quoted in William D. Simonds, *Starr King in California* (San Francisco: P. Elder, 1917), 6.
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11. James Hulse, "Thomas Starr King and the Comstock Lode: The California Patriot's Visits to Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 26 (1983): 91-96; Bancroft, *History of California*, VII, 287, 729. For King "secularity and religion existed neither in disjunction nor in a continuum, but were brought together by spiritual insight." See Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), paper edition, 109.
12. U.S. 72nd Congress, 1st session, 1931-32, *Acceptance and Unveiling of the Statues of Junipero Serra and Thomas Starr King* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932).
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15. His book on the White Hills. . . was regarded as a masterpiece of description and travelogue." See Sandra Sizer Frankiel, *California's Spiritual Frontiers: Religious Alternatives in Anglo-Protestantism, 1850-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 23.
16. Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 100, 104. For information on Mrs. Frémont and Starr King, see Pamela Herr, *Jessie Benton Frémont: American Woman of the 19th Century* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1987), esp. 311-17, 319, 324, 371-72.
17. Starr, 100.
18. *Ibid.*, 101. King's letters about the California landscape sent to the *Boston Transcript* have been collected in a handy volume, John A. Hussey, ed., *A Vacation among the Sierra: Yosemite in 1860* (San Francisco: The Book Club of San Francisco, 1960).
19. As quoted in Wendte, *Thomas Starr King: Patriot and Preacher*, 141. Wendte duplicates passages from the more notable letters sent to the *Transcript*.
20. John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987, originally published, 1911), 133.
21. As quoted in Wendte, 122.
22. As paraphrased in *ibid.*, 120-121.
23. As quoted in *ibid.*, 121.
24. Arriving in California in 1835 aboard a hide and tallow trader out of Boston, Dana praised California's fruitful environment: "Blessed with a climate, than which there can be no better in the world; free from all manner of disease, whether epidemic or endemic; and with a soil in which corn yields from seventy to eighty-fold. In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be." See Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years before the Mast* (New York: Airmont Publishing Co., 1965, originally published, 1840), 136-137.
25. As quoted in Wendte, 121-122.
26. *Ibid.*, 128.
27. *Ibid.*, 133-134.
28. See Hart, *A Companion to California*, 474. For Clarence King's later role with the U.S. Geological Survey, see Henry Nash Smith, "Clarence King, John Wesley Powell, and the Establishment of the United States Geological Survey," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 34 (1947-1948): 37-58.
29. As quoted in Wendte, 136-137.
30. *Ibid.*, 138.
31. Oscar T. Shuck, comp., "Selections from a Lecture-Sermon after Visiting Yosemite Valley," *The California Scrap Book* (San Francisco: Hubert H. Bancroft, 1869), 457; and Thomas S. King, *Christianity and Humanity* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1877), 293. Edited by Edwin P. Whipple, the latter contains 22 of Starr King's major sermons.
32. On the Hetch Hetchy controversy, see Kendrick A. Clements, "Politics and the Park: San Francisco's Fight for Hetch Hetchy, 1908-1913," *Pacific Historical Review* 47 (1979): 185-216; Elmo R. Richardson, "The Struggle for the Valley: California's Hetch Hetchy Controversy," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 38 (1959): 249-258; and Stephen P. Sayles, "Hetch Hetchy Reversed: A Rural-Urban Struggle for Power," *ibid.* 64 (1985): 254-263. Although Muir outlived King by 50 years, both Muir and King died shortly after pursuing their great causes to the bitter end.
33. Dunlap, *California People*, 110.
34. Starr, 190.
35. Dunlap, 110.
36. See Francis P. Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965, paper ed.), 122.
37. *Ibid.*, 122-126. For a biography of Olmsted, see John E. Todd, *Frederick Law Olmsted* (Boston: Twayne, 1982).
38. *Dictionary of American Biography*, V, 405.
39. *Alta California*, March 7, 1864.
40. Starr, 191.
41. King regarded John C. Frémont as intellectually inferior to his wife, Jessie. "Referring to a suggestion that Frémont be appointed ambassador to France, he commented dryly: 'She would have made a most brilliant and serviceable minister, and he can at least talk French.'" See Herr, *Jessie Benton Frémont*, 313.
42. Hart, *A Companion to California*, 261.
43. *Dictionary of American Biography*, V, 404-405.

## LANGLOIS, "Mary Austin," pp. 22-35.

1. The term "literary magazines" refers to those American magazines which published stories, poems, and essays, and were influential in the development of American literature.



2. John Tebbel, *The American Magazine: A Compact History* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1969), 119.
3. Robert E. Spiller, et al., eds., *The Literary History of the United States*, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1974), 960.
4. Mary Austin, *Earth Horizon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), 177.
5. Edwin R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis: Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1955), 51.
6. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 231.
7. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 231.
8. Thomas Matthew Pearce, *Mary Hunter Austin* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1965), 39.
9. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 231.
10. A. B. Nye to Mary Austin, 12 January 1906, A. B. Nye Papers, Bancroft Library.
11. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 291.
12. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis: Editor of the Southwest*, 49.
13. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 294.
14. R. Gordon Kelly, *Children's Periodicals of the United States* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), 379.
15. Mary Austin, "Regionalism in American Fiction," *English Journal*, February 1932, 102.
16. Mary Austin to William Booth, 11 June 1907, Mary Austin Collection, Huntington Library, hereinafter cited as H. L.
17. Tebbel, *The American Magazine: A Compact History*, 111.
18. "Mary Austin," *My Maiden Effort*, intro. by Gelett Burgess (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1921), 15.
19. Bliss Perry to Mary Austin, 25 February 1902, H. L.
20. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1885-1905* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 38.
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22. Mary Austin, "The Folk Story in America," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, January 1934, 10.
23. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 230.
24. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 200.
25. Mary Austin to Houghton Mifflin Company, 25 November 1902, in *The Women Who Make Our Novels*, by Grant Overton (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1918), 164-169.
26. Mary Austin, *Lost Borders* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1909), 3.
27. Mary Austin, *The Basket Woman* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904), v.
28. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 258.
29. Dudley Taylor Wynn, "A Critical Study of the Writings of Mary Hunter Austin (1868-1934)" (Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1939), 32.
30. Austin, *The Basket Woman*, vii.
31. Mary Austin, "The Lost Mine of Fisherman's Peak," *Out West*, November 1903, 501.
32. Mary Austin, "Regionalism in American Fiction," 107.
33. Mary Austin to William Booth, 1 October 1907, H. L.
34. Lee Ann Johnson, "Western Literary Realism: The California Tales of Norris and Austin," *American Literary Realism*, 1870-1910, Vol. 7, No. 3, (Summer 1974): 279.
35. "Editor's Study," *Harper's*, January 1909, 324.
36. "Editor's Study," *Harper's*, January 1908, 313.
37. Tebbel, *The American Magazine: A Compact History*, 109.
38. "In Western Letters," *Land of Sunshine*, May 1901, 393-394.
39. Charles Amadon Moody to Mary Austin, 3 November 1904, H. L.
40. Bliss Perry to Mary Austin, 7 August 1903, H. L.
41. Bliss Perry, *And Gladly Teach* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935), 176.
42. "Editor's Study," *Harper's*, January 1909, 324.
43. William H. Briggs to Mary Austin, 29 May 1929, H. L.
44. William Dean Howells, *Literature and Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1902), 9-10.
45. Many of Mary Austin's California stories and sketches are available in two recently published works. *Western Trails, A Collection of Short Stories by Mary Austin*, selected and edited by Melody Graulich (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1987), includes more than a dozen short stories written by Mary Austin during the period 1892 to 1910. *The Land of Little Rain and Lost Borders* appear under one cover in *Stories from the Country of Lost Borders*, edited and with an introduction by Marjorie Pryse, (New Brunswick and London: wick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

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2. Murry G. Brooks, et. al., *This One Thing: A Tribute to Henry Burton Sharman* (Toronto: Student Christian Movement of Canada, 1959), 27-28.
3. [Abbie Lyon Sharman], "The Genesis of the Jesus Study Group, A Paper on the work of H. B. Sharman Written in 1935 by an Anonymous Author," typescript, Creative Initiative Archives, Beyond War headquarters, Palo Alto, Calif. These archives are not open to the public. See also Donald Layton Kirkey, Jr., "'Building the City of God': The Founding of the Student Christian Movement of Canada" (M.A. thesis, McMaster University, 1983), 18-28.
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12. Elston John Hill, "Buchman and Buchmanism" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1970); Rathbun interview, October 28, 1985.
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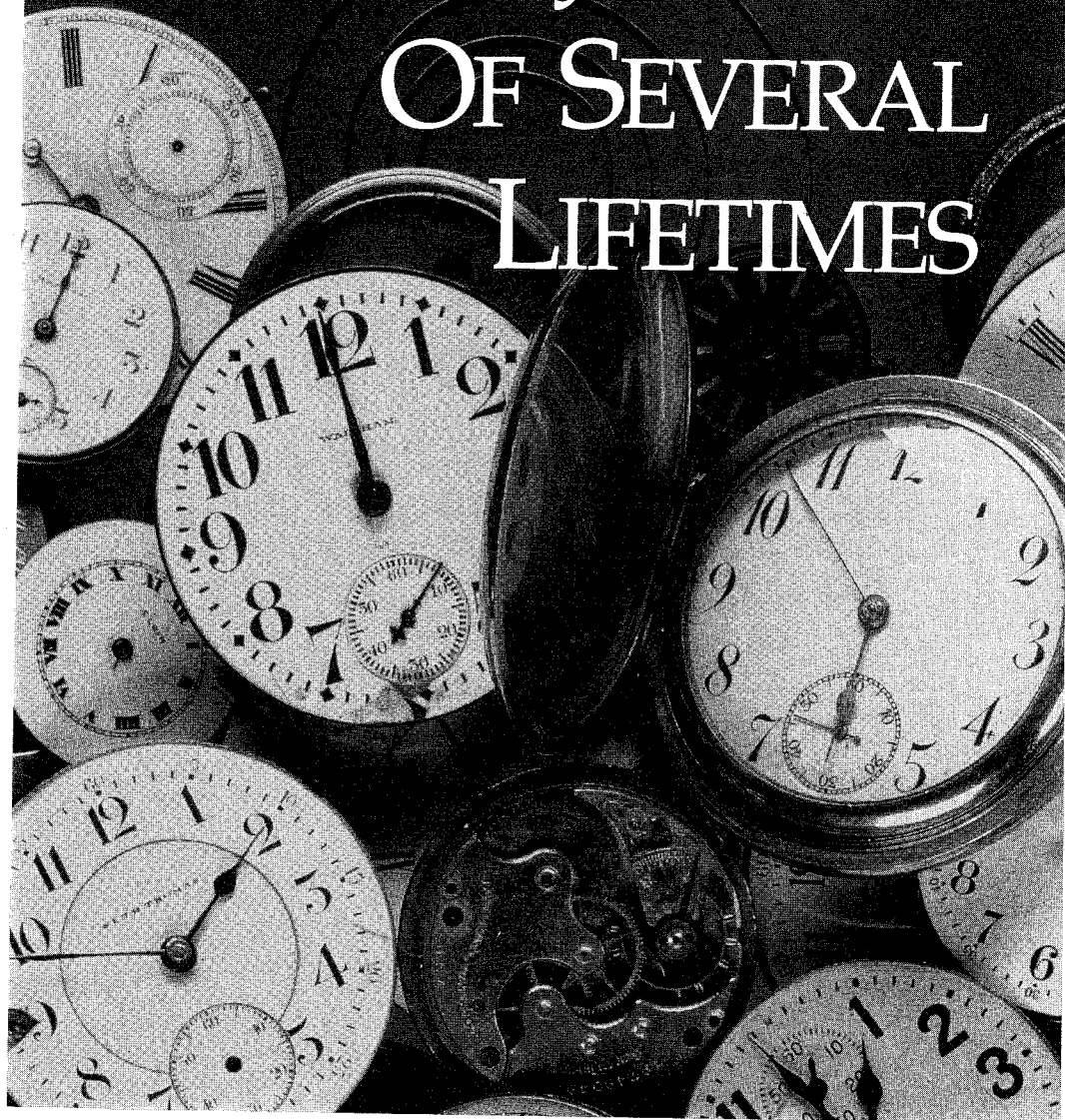
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On the back cover: Maynard Dixon sketch, gouache on paper, for his Mark Hopkins Hotel mural in San Francisco depicting the phases of California history. In this central panel, around which the mural unfolds, legendary Amazon queen Calafia carries an orange and a giant gold nugget, appropriate images of California history. The Mark Hopkins mural is discussed in an article by Beverly Denenberg and Paul Bingham in this issue. Courtesy Bingham Gallery, San Jose, California.



